PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT AND ITS EFFECT ON RETENTION OF ARMY
OFFICERS WITH LESS THAN EIGHT YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE

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ABSTRACT

PERSON-ORGANIZATION FIT AND ITS EFFECT ON RETENTION OF ARMY OFFICERS WITH LESS THAN EIGHT YEARS OF ACTIVE DUTY SERVICE, by Major Amelia D. Carter, 121 pages.

This study examines a system of selection for U.S. Army officers to reach higher retention rates of quality personnel. Reliable predictions of turnover intent are available by incorporating person-organization fit tools during the selection process. Study objectives were to evaluate the relationship between the individual officer's perceived person-organization fit and intent to remain in the Army past initial service commitments and the influence of the mediating factors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the officer's intent to voluntarily remain in the Army. A key underlying premise of the study was the Army's clearly defined organizational values and desired characteristics of officers, purportedly seeking individuals that strike a positive balance between the Army Values, agility, and adaptability. The measurement of correlation between individual and organizational values and characteristics provides a predictive tool for the desired organizational outcomes. A meta-analysis compared civilian and military research on person-organization fit, job satisfaction, and retention to identify similarities, differences, and areas of focus for the human resources component of the Army. Although the study found consistent results in both populations, key differences were identified in retention timelines and the Army's ability to influence extrinsic employment factors.

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ACRONYMS

CTC   Combat Training Center

CVM   Competing Values Model

DOPMA   Defense Officer Personnel Management Act

KSA   Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

OCP   Organizational Cultural Profile

P-O Fit   Person-Organization Fit

ROPMA   Reserve Officers Personnel Management Act

ROTC   Reserve Officer's Training Corps

U.S.   United States

USMA   U.S. Military Academy

ILLUSTRATIONS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Given that the future Army will be a smaller force, assessing Soldiers and Army Civilians will become even more essential to sustaining the Army Profession and to mission accomplishment. Such assessments can allow for better talent management, ensuring that the right person is in the right assignment at the right time.
>
> — U.S. Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-7,

What metrics determine the right person, right assignment, and right time? In a personnel drawdown period, is retention a problem? Perhaps the problem lies in retention of the "right" people, not just people. The Army exerts significant organizational power as a decision-maker. The Army defines the characteristics of the right people. The Army decides whom to retain in a drawdown period. The Army decides whom to include during a period of growth. Therefore, the Army needs effective tools to attract, recruit, select, and retain the right people in order to improve the organizational outcomes of its decisions.

The Army's organizational leadership goals include leveraging human capital to ensure the right person is in the right assignment at the right time. This study does not seek to examine the metrics used to eliminate excess personnel during a drawdown period. This study examines the "right people" problem from another perspective. The study focuses on the selection process to ensure the right people become members of the organization and are retained in the Army for availability at the right times. Retaining the right people means the Army will have quality leaders to lead during challenging periods of conflict, drawdown, or growth.

A look back reveals negative impacts from the loss of the right people at the right time, when right was defined as experienced junior officers. Between 1995 and 2001, the Army experienced a voluntary loss rate of captains that "exceeded what the army could sustain while properly staffing the force" (Lewis 2004, 65). Most officers that have completed their mandatory active duty service obligations have completed four to five years of service and are promoted to captain (between 38-54 months of service). Therefore, voluntary attrition of junior officers primarily affects the senior and experienced among the population (captains with more than 38-54 months of active duty service), depleting the organizational advantages gained through tenure and experience. The Army responded with measures to backfill the captains. Commissioning rates increased through 2005. Simultaneously, the Army lowered the number of months required for promotion from lieutenant to captain and raised the promotion rate percentages for each cohort group. Although these measures decreased the junior officer shortages, the experience could not be replaced so quickly. According to Lewis, after five years of increased voluntary attrition of experienced captains, the Army could only fill 56 percent of positions intended for experienced captains with experienced captains.

If the overall personnel numbers did not reflect a significant deficit when examining numbers of bodies relative to numbers of positions, what difference did experienced junior officers make to the Army? Perhaps in 2000, experienced junior officer deficits were not alarming. However, after 2001, the Army underwent an expansion and surge period lasting through 2013, conducting combat and stability operations in a rapid OPTEMPO environment. Decreased experience was credited with increased mortality rates in combat, decreased combat readiness, decreased technical and

tactical skill among officers, decreased quality of training for subordinates, and decreased ability to conduct complex, coordinated maneuvers during Combat Training Center (CTC) rotations (Lewis 2004, 72-81).

Experience emerged as a concern for the Army and a key characteristic of the right officers during the first decade of the twenty-first century. In 2007-2008, the Army developed and offered initiatives to retain the experienced officers in cohort year groups 1999-2005, indicating the Army recognized the loss of experienced junior officers was problematic enough to justify financial investment in retention bonuses and other options (Coates et al. 2011, 6-7). The initiatives (hastily constructed and implemented in hindsight of the problem) and their mixed results underscore the need to identify, select, and retain the best officers from the beginning to ensure the Army's pool of available leaders is maximized in terms of quality, not just quantity.

As the Army undergoes transformation with reduced numbers, essential tasks emerge: define the characteristics of the right people, identify those individuals, offer them a position in the officer corps, and retain them. Social science research offers solutions and tools to give the Army an advantage in finding and retaining the right people. The Army's vision of the future is dependent on agile and adaptive leaders. In order to recruit, select, develop, and ultimately retain the right leaders clearly defined expectations (outcomes) and characteristics of agile and adaptive leaders are necessary.

The expectations of these leaders are documented in the doctrine of mission command. Principles of mission command include building cohesive teams through mutual trust, creating a shared understanding, and exercising disciplined initiative (U.S. Army 2012a, 2). The character set is defined in numerous sources, to include the Army

Values, Warrior Ethos, Army Leadership Requirements Model, Army Strategic Vision, and others. Clearly, the Army's doctrine recognizes the fundamental importance of leadership and talent, revealing a reliance on the human dimension. The human dimension concept is the framework by which the Army leverages human capital to ensure mission success. The importance of the human dimension is highlighted in an environment of reduced force structure and pecuniary resources and drives changes to selection, training, development, and retention of personnel. How does the Army identify, recruit, develop, and retain the individuals needed for the human dimension? This study focuses on the social science research relevant to selection of personnel and the measure of effectiveness is defined as retention.

Background

In 2012, General Raymond Odierno, the Army's current Chief of Staff, said,

as the Army's end strength reduces over the next five years, it is important to note that this leaner Army will be vastly more capable than our pre-9/11 Army. . . . We are also reviewing and refining our organizational design, mission command and training methods to institutionalize the lessons learned in combat. . . . I believe these are the right investments to posture the Army to meet our strategy and will serve our nation well in the future. In addition to these initiatives, we will continue to reinforce standards, discipline, fitness and accountability. . . . Trust and respect are paramount. Standards and discipline are fundamental [emphasis added]. And I will never pass up an opportunity to talk to our soldiers and our leaders about the sacred trust and our commitment to moral and ethical behavior and values. (U.S. Army 2012b)

The human dimension is acknowledged to be a fundamental element of the mission command, training, experience, standards, discipline, fitness, accountability, trust, and respect mentioned in General Odierno's remarks. The United States Army is a large and complex service organization, grounded in the human dimension. Acknowledging the human dimensional foundation of a service organization is the first

critical assumption underlying this study. Resources and capital are invested into the

organization and, in the case of the Army, the service of national defense is the resultant

product. Systems of talent management are inherently necessary to utilize the most

valuable resource of the organization (human capital) to provide the indispensable

service.

Currently, officers are recruited, accessed, commissioned, and assigned to a basic

branch, primarily based on available slots and a "preference sheet" completed by officers

during the initial recruitment stages. The preferences are entirely based on the officer's

preconceived notions of the functions, requirements, and lifestyle of each branch. Once a

member of the Army's officer corps, the management of an individual's career is the

responsibility of their proponent branch. The Army's doctrinal publication for regulating

officer careers states, "the officer personnel management system balances the needs of

the Army with the aspirations and developmental requirements of the entire officer corps

. . . inherently flexible, the system is designed to respond to a variety of doctrinal,

proponent, commander, and individual initiatives to meet emerging needs" (U.S. Army

2014b, 8-9). Career satisfaction is a framework to gauge the organization's success at

achieving balance between organizational and individual needs. The second critical

assumption for this study is that career satisfaction (job satisfaction) significantly impacts

retention.

<u>Statement of the Problem</u>

This study seeks to examine a selection system tool that can positively influence

retention of the right employees for the organization (i.e., the U.S. Army). As stated

above, career satisfaction impacts retention and is therefore important to the Army. The

current talent management systems may be inadequate to fully leverage the potential talent residing in the youth of our nation. Inadequacy in the human dimension's talent management systems is unacceptable when the Army's vision for the future rests on those leaders.

Unacceptable inadequacy necessitates change, but consensus on the most viable method of change is often difficult to achieve. This study seeks to contribute to the analysis of proposed solutions by examining the feasibility of applying one industrial-organizational psychology concept to the talent management system of the United States Army's officer corps. The personnel it employs are central to the Army's vision of the future. Selection of the right people for the right jobs is critical to the overall future success of the Army.

<div align="center">Person-Organization Fit</div>

Industrial-organizational psychology is the branch of psychology that conducts scientific study of human behavior in the workplace and applies psychological theories and principles to organizations. The goals of industrial-organizational psychology are increased efficiency and productivity of the organization. Industrial-organizational psychology can also provide insight into the physical and mental well-being of employees, and identify and develop desired leadership traits in employees.

Person-organization fit (P-O fit) is a concept within the branch of industrial organizational psychology. P-O fit is defined as the compatibility between people and organizations. To achieve P-O fit, at least one of them must provide what the other needs. Ideally, both meet the needs or share the values of the other. P-O fit is also achieved when the person and organization share similar fundamental characteristics or values

(Chatman 1989, 335; Kristof 1996, 5; Vancouver and Schmitt 1991, 348-50). P-O fit rests on the assumption that the attitudes, career-related satisfaction, and resultant work behaviors are a function of a relationship between the person and the organizational environment. The individual or the environment alone will not produce the same positive results (Westerman and Vanka 2005, 417). Theoretically an employee that places high value on outcomes and hierarchy may not perceive fit in an organization that values teamwork contribution over outcomes or relaxed supervisor-subordinate environment and vice versa. Lack of fit can lead to decreased satisfaction and increased turnover.

To assess P-O fit, prospective employees are evaluated against the organizational values. Levels of fit are reported as levels of congruence or alignment. The measurement of fit between the employer and employee result in a predictive tool for the organization to enhance productivity and decrease tangible and intangible costs associated with turnover and employee dissatisfaction. Other benefits associated with high congruence in measures of P-O fit are improvements in work attitude, organizational commitment, job performance, optimized configuration of work groups and teams, and organizational citizenship behavior. Successful leverage of the principles of P-O fit can improve the quality of product or service generated by an organization and decrease turnover and its associated costs. Therefore, this study will focus on the use of P-O fit in selection (accession) of officer personnel into a basic branch and the measure of effectiveness will be retention.

It is important to clarify the use of the word values throughout this study. Values describe a stable set of characteristics used to guide decision-making. Values can vary in importance as environment changes. For example, an individual may value curiosity in an

academic setting, but place less value on curiosity in an explosives ordnance related career. Values in P-O fit research refer to work-related values and are consistently categorized and studied within social science literature, discussed more in chapter 2. Values in P-O fit are defined as the employer-employee relationship dimensions. Examples of these values include innovation, stability, orientation toward people (fair and supportive), orientation toward outcome (results-oriented, achievement oriented), easygoing versus aggressive, attention to detail, and team orientation. Congruence between the priority assigned to values dimensions by the employee and the employer will result in a higher measure of P-O fit. Higher measure of P-O fit has been linked to increased tenure (retention and experience) as well as intangible benefits such as the quality demonstrated when an individual is willing to "go the extra mile" for an organization or consistently performs in a manner that "exceeds minimum standards". Recruiting others to the organization and conducting voluntary individual professional development are other intangible benefits to P-O fit (Handler 2004).

Significance of the Study

Human capital is the most powerful resource of a large and complex organization such as the United States Army. The cornerstone of planning the Army's continued land force dominance is an agile and adaptive leadership force. Successful alignment of new officers with basic branches that result in high measures of P-O fit may increase retention, thus lowering the costs associated with turnover and voluntary attrition.

This study does not seek to approach the right people problem from the viewpoint of the employee, mandating the Army attempt to accommodate the preferences of hundreds of thousands of active duty employees each year. Retention measures such

these individual-based preferences have been attempted and met with varying degrees of success. This study seeks to nest a selection process within the programs already in existence to increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This study examines the potential effect of a clearly defined set of desired characteristics and values for Army leaders, accurately assessed and measured by logical organizational outcomes.

Agile and adaptive leaders are expected to be experienced, willing to "go the extra mile," and consistently perform above minimum standards. Therefore, the application of the concept of P-O fit has strong potential to form a basis for selection of officers that leads to decreased voluntary attrition rates. An examination of case studies focused on the application of P-O fit will enable us to assess the applicability of the adaptation of a similar system for officer talent management in the United States Army.

Research Questions

The primary research question is, "can the principles of P-O fit be applied to officer initial officer selection and accession to a basic branch in the United States Army to positively impact retention within the officer corps?" Secondary research questions are:

R1. Can the influence of fit on retention found in existing fit literature be replicated in the U.S. Army officer corps to decrease voluntary attrition?

R2. Are there mediators that influence the relationship between P-O fit and retention in the U.S. Army?

R3. Can selecting personnel based on values important to the Army decrease voluntary attrition?

<center>Limitations</center>

It is clear the Army needs a functional system to select officer talent. However, the selection and implementation of a system is far from an easy or straightforward process. Complicating factors include cost, time, legal restraints, and demonstrated effectiveness. Retention is an objective measure of performance, but other factors may influence the outcome.

<center>Cost–Time</center>

The meaning of fit is linked solely to the group with which an individual is compared. The testing and application of P-O fit has been relatively limited in Western companies or militaries. The size and diversity of the Army leads to formation of an overarching culture as well as unique sub-cultures. Each of these sub-cultures must be acknowledged and incorporated when considering P-O fit. Examples of sub-cultures are basic branches, functional branch groups, specialty skill sets within each branch, and countless others. The Army Values and desired characteristics of an agile and adaptive leader may seem gender-neutral, but an examination of gender bias within the selection process is necessary to ensure a balanced and optimized outcome. Multiple measurement tools customized to specific requirements and expectations may need to be developed, leading to increased costs associated with seeking P-O fit.

Adoption of a P-O fit system assumes an educated force of trained professionals capable of properly implementing the system. Failure to recruit, train, and retain high quality personnel to execute the system can lead to a system that is overly standardized and streamlined to a point of ineffectiveness. Overly standardized systems can exhibit rigidity that reduces or completely eliminates variation and become bureaucratic.

<center>10</center>

Bureaucracy often results in a backlog of work, creating artificially imposed wait times and a sluggish system.

Legal Restraints

This study does not recommend changes to the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) or the Reserve Officers Personnel Management Act (ROPMA) laws or structure. DOPMA is recognized as an influencing factor on the Army personnel system and seeks to fairly govern the accession, service obligations, pay, promotion rates, and separation rights and entitlements.

Demonstrated Effectiveness

Retention is only one measure of effectiveness. Retention of quality personnel is also a consideration. "Quality" personnel are often difficult to define prior to performance (during selection phase). Quality is usually defined through performance evaluations. This study does not examine the measures of performance through evaluations and awards to determine quality or job performance. Agile and adaptive leaders are expected to perform well, regardless of specific tasks or jobs assigned. Therefore, this study will focus on the desired characteristics of agile and adaptive leaders to identify the right people to meet the needs of the Army.

P-O fit is inherently difficult to measure objectively and demonstrate a clear linkage to job performance. This is particularly true when an organization or position is objectively evaluated. The Army seeks "quantified" results in the evaluations of its personnel. Although job performance may be a function of agility and adaptability, it is not clearly linked to job satisfaction or retention over time. A third critical assumption of

the study is that some organizational attrition is necessary and desirable, regardless of the fit or performance of the personnel lost.

As in any branch of psychology, results are not guaranteed. A lack of understanding of such a system and its inherent lack of objectivity may lead to its rejection in an organization that is fundamentally objective and results-oriented. Friction is likely between the personnel assigned responsibility to implement the system, the personnel affected by the system, personnel currently charged with personnel management (the way we have always done it mentality), and the commanders demanding results (within the limited prescribed time of their command tenure).

Risk

Since it is difficult to objectively quantify, P-O fit, as a discriminatory measure, may be difficult to defend in a legal setting. Legal personnel would require extensive training on the branch of industrial-organizational psychology and the concept of P-O fit. Another risk is over-reliance. As with any psychological metric, human factors such as current emotional state, distractions, perceptions of the participant, intelligence, language barrier, learning and communication styles, physical needs, and environment can influence results and must be considered in the evaluation of any metric results.

Methodology

A qualitative meta-analysis examining the correlation of P-O fit to retention (decreased turnover) and its associated dimension, job satisfaction, will provide an objective assessment to address the research questions.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Desired Characteristics of the Army Leader

The Unites States Army defines its operational concept as Unified Land Operations and declares one of the foundations of the operational concept is Mission Command. Mission Command exercises authority and control to accomplish missions. Mission Command relies on agile and adaptive leaders (U.S. Army 2012a, 1). Agile and adaptive are keywords that appear in the Army's doctrine when referring to the desired characteristics of leaders (U.S. Army 2012a; U.S. Army 2014b). Although these words capture the essence of the leader, what characteristics are encapsulated within those words? What characteristics are omitted from, but implied, within those words? How does a selection committee define and recognize an agile and adaptable person at the age of eighteen, twenty-one, or even twenty-five? Descriptions of the Army's ideal characteristics of a leader exist in various sources.

The Army defines the characteristics found in an agile and adaptive leader in numerous relevant sources, but does not publish a comprehensive list in a single source. To obtain a measure of P-O fit, the desired characteristics must be identified. Four sources are particularly useful in formulating a description of desired characteristics of the Army leader: The Army Values, description of the Warrior Ethos, doctrine and training publications, and strategic planning. The Army Values will form the cornerstone of the model by which all other characteristics or tools will be compared throughout this study.

The Warrior Ethos compels Soldiers to fight through all conditions to victory no matter how much effort is required…the professional attitude that inspires every American Soldier . . . grounded in refusal to accept failure . . . developed and sustained through discipline, commitment to Army Values, and pride in the Army's heritage . . . the foundation for our total commitment to victory in peace and war . . . the conviction that military service is much more than just another job. It defines who officers are and what officers do . . . the determination to do what is right and do it with pride. Army Values form the very identity of the Army. They are nonnegotiable and apply to everyone at all times, in all situations. Officers require a demonstrated mastery of branch, FA, or MOS-specific skills, and grounding in . . . seven values . . . adopt a Warrior Ethos and a joint, expeditionary mindset will be confident that they are organized, trained, and equipped to operate anywhere in the world, at any time, in any environment, against any adversary to accomplish the assigned mission. (U.S. Army 2014b, 1)

Additional skills identified through Army doctrine and training publications are

the ability to form, function within, and lead cohesive teams; handle the physical and

mental tasks associated with deployment and warfighting; generalize learning to complex

situations; make decisions within a commanders intent in the absence of direct orders;

and are capable of incorporating the human dimension in all aspects of operations (U.S.

Army 2014a).

The All-Volunteer Army will remain the most highly trained and professional land force in the world. It is uniquely organized with the capability and capacity to provide expeditionary, decisive landpower to the Joint Force and ready to perform across the range of military operations to Prevent, Shape, and Win in support of Combatant Commanders to defend the Nation and its interests at home and abroad, both today and against emerging threats. (Odierno 2014)

The Army's Transformation Strategy included a comprehensive change strategy

to the basic force structure to be fielded from approximately 2008 through 2030. The new

force structure is dependent on an objective force that is versatile, agile, lethal,

survivable, responsive, and sustainable. The cornerstone of this force is quality leadership

that can practice vision, innovation, adaptability, and simplify complexities, handle

ambiguity, and perform well under extreme stress. These leaders are expected to combine

the skilled manpower with technological weapons systems to maintain global land force dominance (Lewis 2004, 70-1).

A synthesis of desired characteristics of an Army leader was derived from these references and summarized in table 1. Each characteristic is categorized by it's relation to an Army Value. The Army defines honor as "carrying out, acting, and living the values of respect, duty, loyalty, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage in everything you do" (U.S. Army 2014c). As the Army Value of honor encompasses the other six values, it was not included in the following tables.

Table 1. Desired characteristics of the Army leader, categorized by relation to Army values					
Loyalty	Duty	Respect	Selfless Service	Integrity	Personal Courage
Desired Characteristics of the Army Leader					
Commitment; Sustainable	Refusal to accept failure; Discipline; Perform with Pride; Physically/ Mentally fit; Lethal; Survivable; Perform under stress; Simplify complexities	Incorporate the human dimension	Service-minded; Adaptable; Teamwork-oriented; Versatile; Agile; Responsive	Do what is right; Handle ambiguity	Confident; Decisive; Autonomous; Vision; Innovative

Source: Created by author.

The need to identify, develop, and retain quality leaders is inherent in creating the force that embodies this vision of the dominant land force. The concept of P-O fit may be an effective system for assessing potential candidates during the recruitment and

selection phases of employment to decrease voluntary turnover during the first three to eight years of service. The scope of this literature review will be focused on the correlation of P-O fit outcomes to the initial phases of employee selection and job satisfaction and organizational commitment as mediating factors of retention.

Refine the Target Population

The Army categorizes specialties, or arms of service within the Army, as branches. Upon initial accession, company grade officers are assigned to only one branch. The sixteen basic branches available for service as an officer are adjutant general, air defense artillery, armor, aviation, chemical, engineers, field artillery, finance, infantry, medical services, military intelligence, military police, ordnance, quartermaster, signal, and transportation. Although additional opportunities are available through specialty skill sets and functional areas after initial accession, the scope of this study is limited to the basic branches available for officers initially accessed as second lieutenants. The basic branches are grouped into functional categories for the purposes of management, training, and leader development (U.S. Army 2014b). The Operations category includes air defense artillery, armor, aviation, chemical, engineers, field artillery, infantry, and military police. Females are not permitted to select armor or infantry at this time. The Operations Support category includes military intelligence and signal branches. The Force Sustainment Category includes adjutant general, finance, medical services, ordnance, quartermaster, and transportation branches. For the purposes of this study, branches that require a specialty skill (medical, dental, veterinary, nurse, medical specialist, Chaplain Corps, and judge advocate general) will be considered as self-select for person-vocation fit and therefore will be excluded.

Table 2. Basic Branches Grouped into Functional Categories		
OPERATIONS	**OPERATIONS SUPPORT**	**FORCE SUSTAINMENT**
Air Defense Artillery Armor Aviation Chemical Engineer Field Artillery Infantry Military Police	Military Intelligence Signal	Adjutant General Finance Medical Services* Ordnance Quartermaster Transportation

Source: Created by author.
NOTE: *Data on Medical Services initial officer accessions not included in the data provided from the Army Human Resources Command for use in this study.

The population of officers accessed in recent years provides a representative sample for predicting the impact of P-O fit on the Army officer population. As the primary target population for this study is officers with less than eight years of service, data from 2007-2014 served as the representative sample to assist in making comparisons or drawing conclusions. According to data provided by Army Human Resources Command, the number of personnel accessed into fifteen of the sixteen basic branches during those eight years was 39,193 (data was not provided for medical services branch). Total number of officer accessions in the 2007-2014 sample peaked in 2010, with 5,746 officers commissioned as second lieutenants during that year. The smallest population was reported in 2014, with only 3,437 officers. The average number of personnel accessed each year into the fifteen branches was 4,900, a factor in determining the ability to generalize results from civilian research to military personnel.
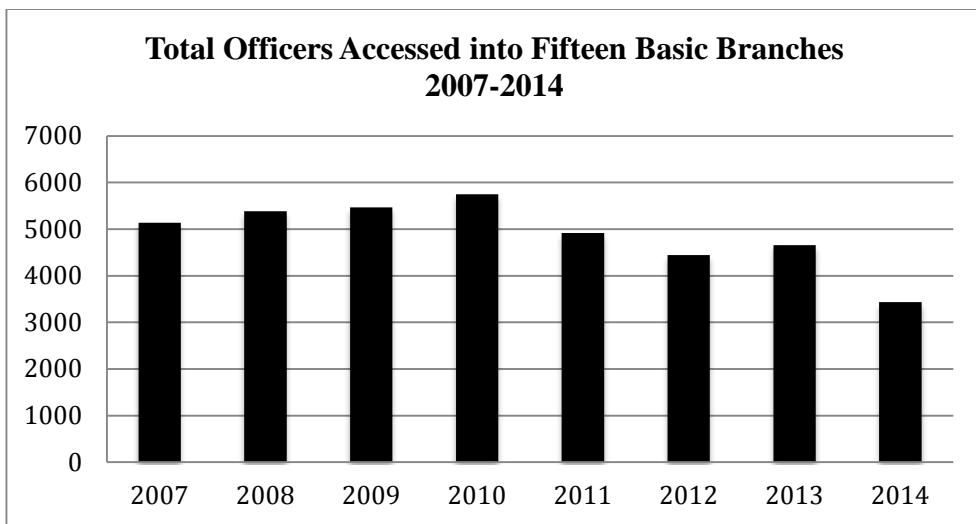
Figure 1. Total Officers Accessed Yearly From 2007-2014, Initially Assigned to the Fifteen Basic Branches (Excludes Medical Services Branch)

Source: Graph original to this study, data provided by Army Human Resources Command, April 2015.

Officer value systems may vary across branches or functional categories. As shown in figure 2, operations is the largest functional category; on average, more than twice as many officers are assigned to an operations branch than a force sustainment branch and more than five times the number of officers assigned to the operations support functional category branches. Value systems may also differ among commissioning sources: 51.7 percent of officers in the sample were commissioned through Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), 27.7 percent through Officer Candidate School (OCS), and 20.3 percent through the United States Military Academy (USMA or West Point). As stated in chapter 1, these facts are pertinent to the risk involved in creating a P-O fit tool that is not valid against all relevant populations.
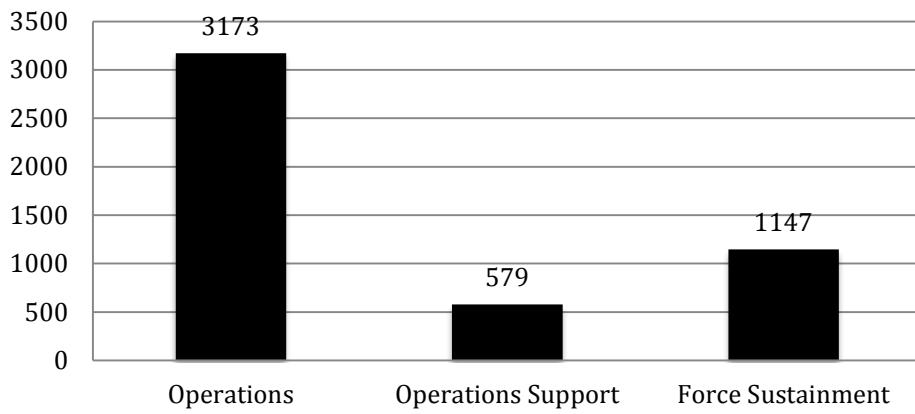
Figure 2.   Average Numbers of Officers Accessed Yearly From 2007-2014,
Compared By Functional Category

Source: Graph original to this study, data provided by Army Human Resources
Command, April 2015.
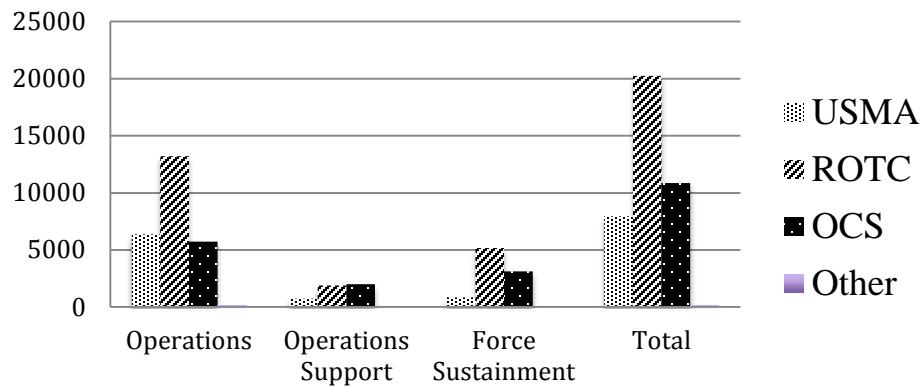
Figure 3.   Total Number of Officers By Commissioning Source,
Compared By Functional Category

Source: Graph Original to this study, data provided by Army Human Resources
Command, April 2015.

The Army invests significant resources in the education and training of officer personnel prior to those officers performing even one day of service as an active duty service member. According to one source, the Army receives 25,000 applications for ROTC scholarships each year and awards approximately 4,000 scholarships (petersons.com 2014). This fact suggests the Army wields enormous organizational power to select the desired candidates from a large pool of applicants and begin the process of socialization (or create a mandatory service obligation to provide time for socialization). Discussed in more detail later in this chapter, socialization can lead to increased commitment, which has been correlated to intent to remain with an organization.

The costs of turnover are easily understood within the context of dollars invested in officers attending USMA or ROTC. According to the data provided by Army Human Resources Command and presented in figure 4, 55 percent of incoming officers are provided money for education through USMA or ROTC. (The actual percentage could be could be higher, as the data on education benefits for OCS or other commissioning sources was not provided). The 55 percent represents a total population of 21,576 (over an eight-year period). An ROTC scholarship includes tuition, books, and a small stipend for other costs (not to exceed $5000 per year) (goarmy.com 2015). Room and board are included in the benefits for students at USMA, which adds an additional $9,804 in average cost per student, per year (West Point 2015; collegedata.com 2015).

Although the specific financial aid package of each officer cannot be known, nor is relevant to this study, an estimate of the investment by the Army during the "pre-hire" or selection phase of employment is helpful to the conclusions sought in this research

study. During the academic year 2014-2015, the average reported cost for tuition and fees for state residents at a public college or university in the United States is $9,139 and the average costs of books is an additional $1,146 at public schools (collegedata.com 2015). $9,139 + $1,146 + $5000 totals an estimated financial aid package of approximately $15,285 per officer, per year of school, for ROTC scholarship recipients. USMA students receive an additional benefit package of room and board ($9804), bringing their total to $25,089. If an officer receives the aid for four years, the total estimated monetary investment in each is $61,140 for ROTC and $100,356 for USMA. More than $100,000 is invested in a prospective employee before the employee works even one day for the organization! Remembering the 21,576 officers that received educational financial aid prior to accession from the sample population, one can estimate the Army spent at at least $1,750,000,000. That is over $1.7 billion dollars invested in approximately 21,000 employees over an eight year period. An initial investment of over $1.7 billion suggests the Army could justify the costs and benefit from an additional tool to efficiently allocate those resources during the selection process.

**Percentage of Officers Receiving Financial Aid for College
Prior to Accession
2007-2014**

Unknown
Financial Aid
for College
28%

Financial Aid
for College
55%

No Financial
Aid for
College
17%
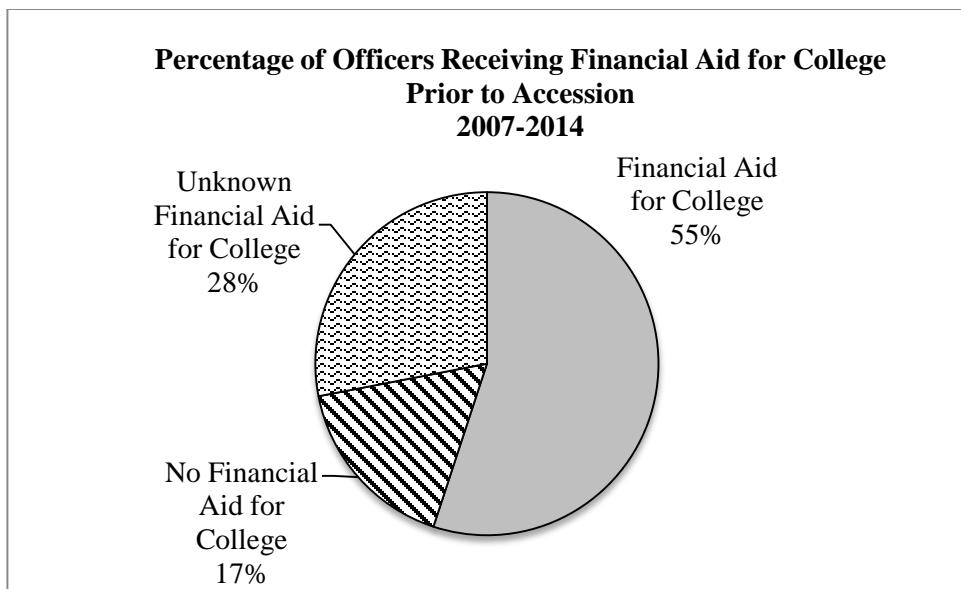
Figure 4.   Percentage of Officers Receiving Financial Aid for College Prior
to Accession 2007-2014

Source: Graph original to this study, data provided by Army Human Resources
Command, April 2015.

<u>Defining P-O Fit</u>

P-O fit is defined as the compatibility between people and organizations. To

achieve P-O fit, at least one of them must provide what the other needs. Ideally, both

meet the needs or values of the other. P-O fit is also achieved when the person and

organization share similar fundamental characteristics or values (Kristof 1996, 5;

Chatman 1989, 335; Vancouver and Schmitt 1991, 348-50). P-O fit rests on the

assumption that the attitudes, career-related satisfaction, and resultant work behaviors are

a function of a relationship between the person and the organizational environment. The

individual or the environment alone will not produce the same positive results

(Westerman and Vanka 2005, 417).

In order to maximize the fit between an organizational culture and an employee, values and needs must be determined and assessed. Higher P-O fit is perceived when the parties perceive a higher positive correlation between the values. This is known as values congruence. Values congruence has been widely studied and posited as the "mechanism by which organizational and individual values affect member's organizational outcomes" (Kalliath, Bluedorn, and Strube 1999, 207). Values are believed to be enduring and preferable when selecting behaviors to reach a desired outcome.

Four common definitions of P-O fit have been suggested to clarify the nature of the relationship phenomenon: P-O fit is a supplementary fit where individuals and organizations possess similar characteristics; a complementary fit where individuals meet a need or fulfills a desired task or role in an organization; a needs-supplied fit where employee needs are met by the organization; and a demand abilities fit where an individual's abilities correspond with the needs of the organization (Morley 2007, 112). The last is the definition that most closely aligns with the Army's task of finding and retaining the individuals that can fulfill the demanding roles of agile and adaptive leaders.

Bretz and Judge (1994) identified four primary categories for organizing the P-O fit conceptualization literature. First is the level of correlation or congruence between an employee's knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and the actual core job requirements. Second is the level of correlation or congruence between the needs of the employee and the organization. Third is the congruence between the values of each. Lastly is the congruence between the organization's image and the employee's personality. Although all four can be applied to the Army's demands for leaders, the research analyzed in this

study focuses on the third: congruence between the values of an organization and its prospective employees.

A review of the literature related to organizational relationships (also described as contracts) is helpful for understanding the relationships between an organization and its prospective employees. Research on the most efficient and successful methods of forming beneficial contracts examines the problem from cognitive, values, and contextual perspectives (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005; Chatman 1989; Westerman and Vanka 2005; Piasentin and Chapman 2006). P-O fit research seeks to determine the antecedent-behavior relationship between the various dimensions that lead to successful employment contracts. Hiring the personnel that are needed can be costly but provide organizations with a pool of potential managers (Viney, Adamson, and Doherty 1997, 180-82).

Organizational Relationships–Forming Beneficial Contracts
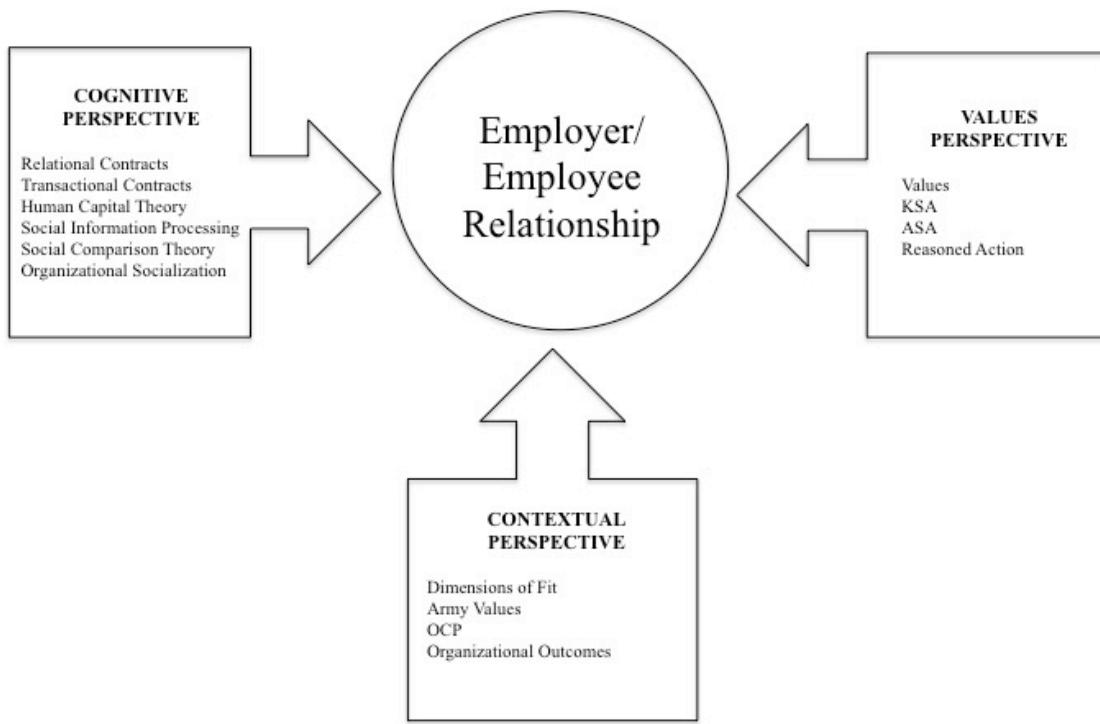
Figure 5.   Organizational Relationships: Contributing Factors and Perspectives

Source: Created by author.

Cognitive Perspective

Relational and Transactional Psychological Contracts

Sekiguchi noted researchers classified the employment contracts as two types of psychological contracts, each with specific attributes, expectations, target applicant population, and relationship to the concept of P-O fit (2007, 120-121). The two types identified were relational and transactional psychological contracts. Transactional psychological contracts are grounded in specific requirements and rewards; KSAs are

clearly specified and transition easily between organizations. Relational psychological contracts most closely resemble the expectations of Army officers. In relational psychological contracts, details of the job expectations and requirements are less clear than in transactional psychological contracts. Inducements and contributions are not monitored as closely or considered as relevant by either party in relational psychological contracts. Trust is foundational in relational psychological contracts, as they are likely to occur in long-term relationships between the employee and the organization and are often characterized by complexity in mutual demands, reciprocity, and commitment. Qualities of mutual trust, reciprocity, loyalty, and commitment are also known as organizational citizenship behaviors (Black 2008, 47-50; Van Dyne, Graham, and Dienesch 1994, 766-70).

The specificity of transactional psychological contracts more closely resembles the contingency employee population, where demands, expectations, and inducements are clear. The relationship is less complex than a relational contract and long-term expectations or commitment may not be required (Hulin and Glomb 1999). Changes or adaptations often necessitate a new transactional contract, but relational psychological contract employees are expected to adapt to new tasks and learn and acquire new knowledge, skills, and abilities during their employment (Sekiguchi 2007, 121), much like the expectations of Army officers.

The concept of P-O fit may have higher applicability to the formation of relational psychological contracts, while person-job fit may have higher applicability in seeking transactional psychological contracts (Sekiguchi 2007, 121). Person-job fit relies on KSAs and can be compared to the methods for assignment of military occupational

specialties, whereas the complex demands expected of officer personnel more closely resemble the definition of a relational psychological contract. P-O fit has been shown to correlate positively with organizational citizenship behaviors (O'Reilly and Chatman 1986, 495), which were characteristics of a relational psychological contract. P-O fit has been shown to increase organizational commitment and decrease turnover (Bretz and Judge 1994, 41-48; Chatman 1991, 470). Additionally, P-O fit has been positively related to adaptability. Since the goals of retaining adaptable personnel align with the characteristics of relational psychological contracts, P-O fit may be a better predictor of satisfaction and retention than other related constructs (Sekiguchi 2007, 121).

Human Capital Theory

Becker postulates two primary types of human capital are available to organizations: general and firm specific (Sekiguchi 2007, 121). General human capital represents knowledge, skills, and abilities sets that are broad, generalized, and easily transferred between organizations. Contingent workforces are recruited through the general human capital pool. Employees invest in their own training and benefit from being immediately able to meet the demands of an organization. Army officers more closely align with the second type of human capital known as firm-specific human capital. Firm specific human capital represents an internally developed KSA set that is not easily transferred outside the organization. Employees are not expected to demonstrate a specific set of KSAs; the organization provides training necessary to develop the desired skill sets once the employee is hired (Lepak and Snell 1999, 36).

Firm specific capital becomes valuable to the organization as rare and non-substitutable assets of the organization. In return, employees are expected to demonstrate

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loyalty (retention) to the organization and use the KSAs in the desired manner for the benefit of the organization (Barney 1991, 100-9). Such assets can produce an advantage for an organization such as the advantage expected by the Army leaders through the development of the agile and adaptive leader force.

Social Information Processing–Social Comparison Theory

Social information processing theory postulates the opinion of others can influence an individual's opinion and attitudes. This is attributed to the idea that the information provided by others is assimilated in order to categorize and process the environment, therefore helping an individual make sense of their environment (Salancik and Pfeffer 1978, 226-30; Thomas and Griffin 1989, 65-70). However, research shows that individual choices and outcomes such as voluntary retention, are more highly influenced by individual experiences, as opposed to group influences (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005, 316-17). This theory has application for the Army when determining unit influences on individual decisions, such as retention.

Lindell and Brandt found that the quality of environmental perceptions did correlate with the individual choices related to turnover and seem to corroborate findings that individuals use comparisons between their perceptions and those declared by their coworkers to subjectively assess fit within their organization (2000, 340-44). This effect could explain why members of a unit can influence a decision to voluntarily remain in the Army. The opinions and perceptions of others can influence the framework for each individual to evaluate their personal experience and perceived fit.

Social comparison theory states behavior and attitudes are linked to a relative comparison by an individual between their characteristics, situation, and outcome and the

experience and thoughts of others in similar circumstances (Buunk and Mussweiler 2001, 472). Individuals are more influenced by the opinion of others when they are uncertain of their own. The uncertainty leads to seeking additional information, often found in the form of opinions of coworkers and team members and may be perceived as a confirmation of the "true nature" of an environment, thus establishing an individual's perceptions and influencing behavior. Therefore, it can be concluded that an individual's retention decision may be minimally influenced by the behavior and attitudes of the assigned unit, but the organizational behavior may be significantly influenced by the same. The ability of an organization to influence an employee's perception of fit (or job satisfaction) is a powerful mediating factor in the assessment of initial fit on retention.

<center>Organizational Socialization</center>

Organizational culture is the system of values, actions, and principles that exists within an organization and influences the behaviors of its members. One theoretical framework model for categorizing organizational cultures is the competing values model (CVM). In the competing values model, two axes categorize an organization: internal-external focused and structural control–flexibility orientation. Internally focused organizations prefer to maintain internal norms and systems, while an externally focused organization prefers to modify systems as necessary to remain competitive. Structurally controlled organizations often use centralized management decision-making while flexibility oriented organizations encourage employee empowerment (Testa, Mueller, and Thomas 2003, 134-5). The Army could be described as an internally focused-structural oriented organization, and some research suggests a high correlation between a structural control organization and job satisfaction.

Perceived fit can be influenced once an employee becomes a part of the

organization through a process known as organizational socialization. During this

process, employees become familiar with the unique demands and culture of the

organization. The employee acquires knowledge on the values of the organization,

expected behaviors, and their role within the organization. One theory is that socialization

can lead to a higher perception of fit, which might result in higher perceived job

satisfaction, which could result in lower turnover intention. Research on socialization and

organizational outcomes found a positive relationship between socialization process and

increased tenure over periods as long as three years (Chao et al. 1994, 736). However,

socialization is only one mediating factor on job satisfaction or tenure. Individual

outcomes can also be influenced by a change in priorities, measure of success, family

circumstances, health, or many other factors.

<center>Values (Standards) Perspective</center>

Edwards clarifies that when used in the context of fit, values include a synthesis

of preferences, interests, motives and goals (1996, 305-6). Sagie and Elizur note that

values transcend specific situations and become the standards for selecting alternative

behaviors to achieve the perceived desired state, object, or goals. Values can be

distinguished within the domain of life where they are relevant, such as work, sports,

religion, or generally applied (1996, 504-5, 511). In organizational research, values in

work domains are often equated to organizational culture. Values congruence and P-O fit

are often seen as interchangeable (Van Vianen, De Pater, and Van Dijk 2007, 189-90).

Value congruence is defined as the degree to which an individual's and organization's

values overlap (Chatman 1991, 459). Theoretically, higher levels of overlap will result in

<center>30</center>

higher employee satisfaction (Kristof 1996, 10-15), which in turn leads to retention (Chatman 1991, 463). Researchers theorize individuals and organizations will develop a perception of fit based on the level of congruence between the values of each entity during the selection and recruitment process. If the congruence between the values set is perceived as low qualified individuals may decline to seek employment with an organization (Chatman 1989, 337-8). Work values may relate directly to retention decisions (Van Vianen, De Pater, and Van Dijk 2007, 197).

Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) form a related concept that influences the selection and retention decisions in a person-organization relationship. Prospective employers use KSAs to determine predictive evaluations of an individual's success at a certain task or job. They can be used to screen "qualified" applicants from "unqualified" ones (U.S. Department of Veteran's Affairs 2014). KSAs for officers could include innovative thinking, sensemaking, and adaptability. These three qualities were identified as the three most critical for Army officers in conducting Army design (Wolters et al. 2014, v).

Research on recruiting employees in the twenty-first century requires an appreciation for the concerns of the most qualified applicants. Some research concluded employees place as much importance on finding the right organization to work for as they place on the actual job they will perform for that organization. The implications of this research are clear. Selection and recruitment based solely on the KSA set required by a job and an employee is insufficient to meet retention goals and associated decreased costs (Morley 2007, 110).

Attraction-selection-attrition model research suggests that individuals assess their fit to specific organizations and tend to seek employment with organizations that they deem most closely aligned to their values or characteristics (Schneider 2001, 146). Organizations also tend to select candidates that demonstrate values and characteristics similar to the organization. The perception of the values of the organization therefore drives the attraction phase of the model. Organizations must be able to clearly define their values and understand the public image or impression experienced by the potential candidate pool. Inherent risk in this model is that as organizations and individuals self-select those relationships with the highest congruence, an organization can become homogenous and resistant to change (Billsberry 2007, 135).

Although this model seems logical, other factors can influence an individual's choice in applying for jobs. Proximity, familiarity, and exposure to the organization can have an effect on the attraction phase of the ASA model. Organizations have the most influence over the exposure factor, especially during the recruitment opportunities of college or graduate students. To reach positive correlations of P-O fit, potential employees should gain a comprehensive knowledge base on the actual nature of the work and organizational behavior, the organizational values must be clearly communicated to the prospective employees, and potential employees must have proximity, familiarity, and exposure to gain the knowledge of the organizational values (Billsberry 2007, 144-5).

Billsberry also presents two alternative propositions to explain the attraction phase. First, applicants must make a vocational choice before an attraction to a specific organization can be developed. This proposition might explain the ranking of branch choices by individuals during the accessions phase. Second, attraction will be influenced

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by proximity, familiarity, and exposure to the values of an organization. This proposition implies an organization can leverage recruiting and information sources to influence and attract the type of individuals it desires to select and hire.

Ajzen suggested a theory of reasoned action and planned behavior, which stated an individual's beliefs about an organization are evident in the attitudes (positive or negative) demonstrated about the organization, which can then guide an individual's behaviors or intended behaviors (1991, 181-4). Attitudes can be influenced by several factors, often subjective in nature. This is relevant to the attraction-selection-attrition phases of employment because research indicates employees that perceive fit are more likely to seek employment with an organization, and in the absence of objective assessment tools, the perception is subjective (Judge and Cable 1997, 382-4).

<u>Contextual Perspective</u>

Dimensions of P-O Fit and the Army Values

Most measures of P-O fit are subjective. Research subjects are asked questions and generate responses. This type of fit is based on perceptions and labeled as a "same-source fit index". This data is examined within the P (person) and O (organization) axes on an index of fit. Data is also gathered through the perception-based feedback by subjects other than the focal person and included within the O axis of the fit index and labeled as "different source fit index". Adding the different source fit index to the concept has not proven to provide an objective method of measuring fit. Subjectivity is still inherent within the concept (Van Vianen, De Pater, and Van Dijk 2007, 189). In other words, persons within the organization and the prospective employee each provide

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feedback that provides the organization and person scores on various values deemed important to the organization. The feedback is inherently subjective.

Measure of values congruence or P-O fit is often conducted through the use of a variation of a tool known as an Organizational Cultural Profile (OCP). The tool was initially developed by in 1991 (O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell 1991). Fifty-four value-based characteristics are provided to research subjects. Subjects are asked to sort the characteristics along a nine-category scale (forming an approximate bell curve) twice, first describing their personal importance placed on the value and then their perception of the organization's importance placed on each value. The categories are limited in the number of characteristics that can be ascribed within each, forcing the respondent to truly sort the values into measurably different categories. In 1997, Cable and Judge developed a revised OCP, limiting the respondent to forty characteristics.

Most Characteristic ← → Least Characteristic
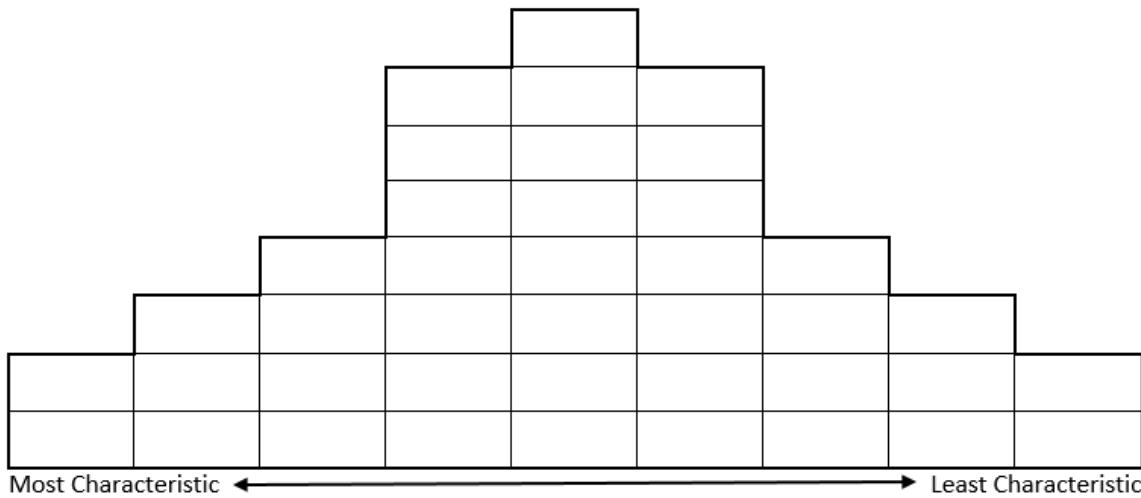
Figure 6.   Example Sort Template of OCP Characteristics

Source: Adapted from D. M. Cable and T. A. Judge, "Interviewers' Perceptions of Person-Organization Fit and Organizational Selection Decisions," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 82 (1997): 546-81, accessed March 3, 2015, http://www.timothy-judge.com/OCP.htm.

The desired characteristics of an Army leader listed earlier in this literature review are related to the Army Values and the characteristics of the OCP, as shown in table 3.

			Selfless		Personal
Table 3. Relationships between Army Values, Desired Characteristics of the Army Leader, and Measurement of Values/ Characteristics on the Organizational Cultural Profile Tool					
Loyalty	Duty	Respect	Selfless Service	Integrity	Personal Courage
Desired Characteristics of the Army Leader					
Commitment; Sustainable	Refusal to accept failure; Discipline; Perform with Pride; Physically/ Mentally fit; Lethal; Survivable; Perform under stress; Simplify complexities	Incorporate the human dimension	Service- minded; Adaptable; Teamwork- oriented; Versatile; Agile; Responsive	Do what is right; Handle ambiguity	Confident; Decisive; Autonomous; Vision; Innovative
OCP Characteristics (40 Item Revised Scale – Cable and Judge, 1997)					
High pay for good performance; Security of employment; Enthusiasm for the job; Stability	Competitive; Aggressive; Rule-oriented; Highly organized; High performance expectations; Emphasis on quality; Work long hours; Distinctive; Confront conflict directly; Calm; Analytical; Results oriented	People- oriented; Fair; Praise for good performance; Supportive; Developing friends at work	Socially responsible; Good reputation; Adaptability; Team- oriented; Share information freely; Achievement oriented; Tolerance; Unconstrained by too many rules; Informal; Opportunities for professional growth	Reflective; Attention to detail; Clear guiding philosophy	Results oriented; Quick to take advantage of opportunities; Decisive; Individual responsibility; Autonomy; Risk taking; Innovative

Source: Created by author.

Common organizational outcomes studied within the concept of P-O fit are

performance, turnover, organizational citizenship behavior (contextual performance),

organizational commitment, trust in management, satisfaction with coworkers, and organizational satisfaction. Research seeks to correlate P-O fit to each of these dimensions to establish the quantifiable results for managerial application during the attraction, selection, and retention phases of employment. Previous meta-analyses have detected correlation between P-O fit and each of these outcomes, many of which can be compared to Army Values. The Army Values are related to the organizational outcomes, providing a construct by which P-O fit could be assessed within the existing Army declared values and desired outcomes. As stated earlier in chapter 2, the Army Value of honor encompasses the other six values; therefore it was excluded in the charts.

Table 4. Relationships between Army Values, Desired Characteristics of the Army Leader, Measurement of Values/Characteristics, and Desired Organizational Outcomes					
Loyalty	**Duty**	**Respect**	**Selfless Service**	**Integrity**	**Personal Courage**
Desired Characteristics of the Army Leader					
Commitment; Sustainable	Refusal to accept failure; Discipline; Perform with Pride; Physically/ Mentally fit; Lethal; Survivable; Perform under stress; Simplify complexities	Incorporate the human dimension	Service-minded; Adaptable; Teamwork-oriented; Versatile; Agile; Responsive	Do what is right; Handle ambiguity	Confident; Decisive; Autonomous; Vision; Innovative
OCP Characteristics (40 Item Revised Scale – Cable and Judge, 1997)					
High pay for good performance; Security of employment; Enthusiasm for the job; Stability	Competitive; Aggressive; Rule-oriented; Highly organized; High performance expectations; Emphasis on quality; Work long hours; Distinctive; Confront conflict directly; Calm; Analytical; Results oriented	People-oriented; Fair; Praise for good performance; Supportive; Developing friends at work	Socially responsible; Good reputation; Adaptability; Team-oriented; Share information freely; Achievement oriented; Tolerance; Unconstrained by too many rules; Informal; Opportunities for professional growth	Reflective; Attention to detail; Clear guiding philosophy	Results oriented; Quick to take advantage of opportunities; Decisive; Individual responsibility; Autonomy; Risk taking; Innovative
Desired Organizational Outcomes					
Turnover; Organizational Commitment	Performance	Trust in Management	Citizenship Behavior Contextual Performance	Citizenship Behavior Contextual Performance	Citizenship Behavior Contextual Performance

Source: Created by author.

Although the Army values do not directly align with P-O fit dimension of satisfaction with coworkers, the Army's structure is based around small groups nested within larger groups, so the research on group dynamics and influence on turnover intention, job satisfaction, and commitment may be relevant. Some research indicates that an individual's perceptions of fit and satisfaction can be influenced by the perceptions of fit and satisfaction of coworkers, particularly if the individual's work tasks require interdependent teams to accomplish the organization's goals (Salancik and Pfeffer 1978, 238-41). Van Vianen, De Pater, and Van Dijk found a strong relationship between an individuals' perception of fit at the team level (average team size of nine personnel) and turnover intention (2007, 196-7).

P-O Fit Research on Effects and Correlation to Outcomes

Additional research conducted within the context of graduates found perceptions of fit do have importance in the decisions made by the individual concerning retention (Bretz and Judge 1994, 40). Graduate research (longitudinal field study) also indicated a perception of fit can positively correlate with retention over a six year period, even when organizational and survey attrition were controlled (Garavan 2007, 161-3).

A meta-analysis conducted by Hoffman and Woehr found a weak to moderate relationship between P-O fit and job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and employee turnover. Kristoff-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson (2005) conducted a meta-analysis and found a low correlation between P-O fit and overall job performance, moderate correlation between P-O fit and an employee declared intention to leave the organization, moderate correlation between attitude dimensions such as satisfaction with coworkers and supervisors and trust in management, a strong correlation between P-O fit

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and organizational commitment, and the strongest correlation was found to exist between P-O fit and organizational satisfaction. A third meta-analysis determined P-O fit was a potentially good predictor of turnover, but not of job performance (Arthur et al. 2006, 791-94). A fourth meta-analysis determined modest correlations between P-O fit and intent to turnover, as well as P-O fit and job satisfaction (Verquer, Beehr, and Wagner 2003, 485).

In addition to job satisfaction, this study recognizes the importance of another mediating factor to turnover: organizational commitment, which can be defined as the quality that results in higher individual contributions to an organization and higher desires to maintain membership within the organization. Some research suggests organizational commitment may be a better predictor than job satisfaction within military samples when predicting turnover (Griffeth, Hom, and Gaertner 2000, 471). As a part of a broader model of selection-satisfaction-retention, this study focuses on the relationship between job satisfaction and retention but acknowledges the consistently established positive correlations between P-O fit and turnover, organizational behavior, organizational commitment, and satisfaction. As shown in table 4, each of these outcomes corresponds to the Army values of loyalty, selfless service, integrity, and personal courage.

A proposed theoretical model formed from the preceding body of literature shows the relationship between P-O fit and the desired outcome of voluntary retention. The mediating and influencing factors are linked to the perception of fit and the outcome of retention, demonstrating the interconnectedness of the factors on retention decisions. Although P-O fit has been shown to have a direct correlation with retention, the complex

nature of the relationship between fit and mediating factors such as satisfaction and

commitment play an important role in reaching conclusions on the use of fit in the

personnel selection process of the military.
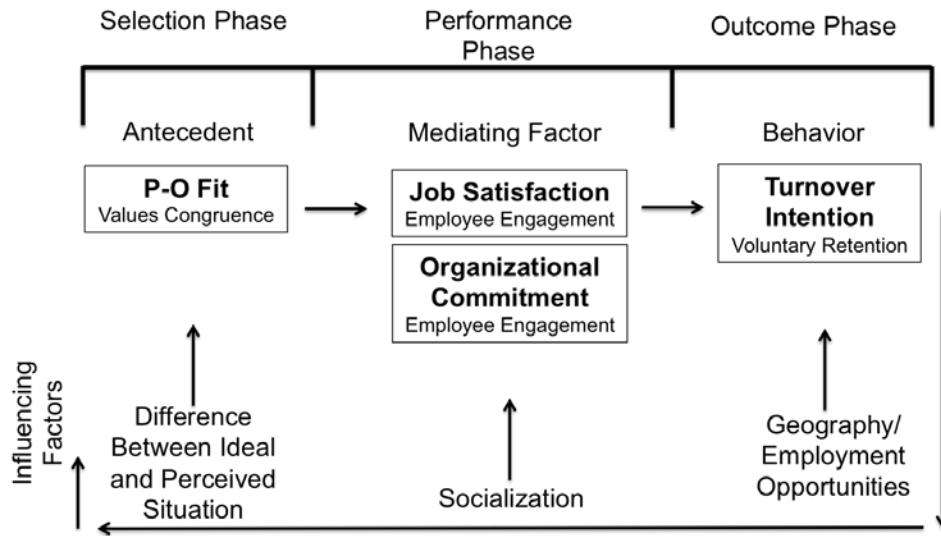
Figure 7.   Proposed Model of P-O Fit Impact on Voluntary Retention

Source: Created by author.

Challenges to Determining Exact Value of Correlation

Challenges persist in determining the exact value of the correlation between P-O

fit dimensions and employee satisfaction and turnover, in part because conceptualization

of P-O fit lacks a standardized format. The lack of a standardized conceptual framework

contributes to confusion over the very nature and application of P-O fit (Kristof-Brown,

Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005, 282). The risk of such confusion is the misapplication of

P-O fit and its subsequent failure to produce the desired results for an organization.

Another challenge is the sample for the primary body of P-O fit research data. Carless points out that many studies use college students as the source of research data, therefore eliminating aspects or factors that may influence behavior when conducting searches for employment in an experimental setting as opposed to an actual search for work (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, and Johnson 2005, 414).

Some researchers have theorized a potential effect of culture on the effect of P-O fit concepts (Sweeney and McFarlin 2004, 150). Cultures that have a higher emphasis on "self" or individualism may experience a higher correlation between P-O fit and employee turnover. Therefore, the variation of correlation across cultures could be partially the result of a cultural emphasis toward interdependence versus one toward independence.

Researchers have been unable to prove an antecedent-behavior pattern related to P-O misfit and actual voluntary turnover, only in turnover intent. Turnover intention is noted as the most accurate predictor of actual turnover and is measured by asking direct questions about the individual's willingness to voluntarily remain or withdraw from an organization. However, some have theorized that job dissatisfaction and employment alternatives are strongly influencing factors that may contribute to retention despite lack of P-O fit (Lee and Mitchell 1994, 62-9).

A complex and cyclical relationship exists between job satisfaction and organizational commitment, thus making it difficult to extrapolate the effects of one or the other on turnover. Job satisfaction may lead to higher commitment, but once commitment is established, it positively influences an individual's perception of satisfaction (Sumer 2009, 29-36).

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research is to identify a system of selection (accession) of United States Army officers to improve the level of congruence between the values of the organization and individual in order to reach higher retention rates of quality personnel.

Meta-Analysis

This chapter will present and discuss the scientific method of qualitative meta-analysis as an approach to synthesize independent case studies to obtain generalized hypotheses for application in talent management of Army officers during the accessions phase of their career. The evaluation criterion for inclusion in the meta-analysis is presented in this chapter.

Qualitative meta-analysis is a method for reviewing primary case studies on a specific or related phenomenon to provide a secondary and comprehensive summation of the results. The goal of a meta-analysis is to analyze the generalized effects of the phenomenon and examine the factors that may influence ambiguity or differences in outcomes of the studies. Additionally, meta-analysis examines the possible affect of research methodology on the findings of primary research. The analysis allows the researcher to gain a broader perspective and formulate key generalizations that further the application of relevant individual primary research. Theories are examined through the meta-analysis process to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of a field of study (Timulak 2009, 592). Existing research findings have potential to develop theories that can be applied to effective talent management for the Army.

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There are two goals of a meta-analysis: synthesize the findings within a group of studies on a phenomenon or concept to provide a more comprehensive explanation or theory about the results and secondly, provide an assessment on the amount of influence a research methodology may have had on the findings of the original studies. In other words, the meta-analysis aims to provide a broader perspective on the results of individual studies conducted on the same topic. Ambiguities, inconsistencies, and differences in results are analyzed to provide an interpretation of original study results.

Meta-Synthesis - Meta-Interpretation

Since the end product of a meta-analysis seeks to provide a comprehensive synthesis and interpretation of original research studies, another name for a meta-analysis could be a meta-synthesis (Timulak 2009, 528) or meta-interpretation (Weed 2005, 14-7). A meta-synthesis seeks to reach conclusions and inferences from an examination of individual datasets and essential features among the individual studies. A meta-interpretation is a type of meta-analysis that focuses on the findings of the original research, not on the original dataset, because published works often contain only the results and findings; the dataset may not be available in full. To exclude studies based on the nonavailability of original dataset may exclude vital findings that contribute to the comprehensive theory. The scope of included research needs to be wide enough to incorporate important or relevant information, with a conformance to criteria to reduce effect of researcher bias. This study sought inclusion of a combination of theoretically relevant studies from the military population and an aggregate of related studies from the civilian sector.

Research Studies Selection Process

Research studies on the concept of P-O Fit were analyzed to derive the comparison characteristics among them. These characteristics were synthesized to form domains for a structural framework to maintain objectivity and avoid bias. Case study inclusion is based on a rating within a coding system. The selection process for the studies will be further explained in chapter 4. The coding system is presented in table 5. The studies included in the meta-analysis are summarized in table 6. Case study relevance was evaluated within the context and framework of organizational origin (private or public sector, education setting), organizational size, research purpose, longitudinal reach of the case study, and the sociocultural context influencers.

Very little research comparing P-O fit and the military has been reported, although database queries included dates from 1975 to present. Case studies involving retention of military personnel were evaluated using the same criteria as civilian cases (presented in table 6, with the addition of four factors: (1) branch of service studied, (2) rank of personnel evaluated within the study (enlisted or officer), (3) length of time in service of sample population, and (4) similarity of socio-political conditions to current conditions). Studies conducted during a transition or drawdown period were favored for inclusion over those conducted in a period of growth and expansion in the military forces.

Values were assigned in the following manner: 0 (no relationship); 1 (weakly related to the target population and research question); 2 (neutral or unable to assess relationship); 3 (moderate relationship to the target population and research question); 4 (strong relationshipto the target population and research question); 5 (exactly the target population and research question). Median values will be provided for insight into the

consistency across each criterion parameter for each study. For example, a study that scored a value of "5" on relevant research questions, but a value of "1" on method or adequate description of data and methodology would be less likely to be selected for inclusion. Median scores of "3" or higher are strongly preferred for inclusion.

Table 5.   Coding tool used to evaluate research for inclusion in the meta-analysis

Parameter	Rating Dimension	Rating Assigned
1. Origin of the Case Study	Public or Private Education	
2. Statement of the Problem	Relevance	
3. Internal Validity	Appraised Congruence	
4. Relevant Research Questions	Relevance	
Selection impacts retention?		
Measures of effectiveness?		
Selection methodology?		
5. Sociocultural Context	United States or Third Country	
6. Organizational Size	Number of employees	
7. Research Subjects	Size, demographic data, or relationships to researcher	
8. Method of research	Appraised Congruence or Bias	
9. Adequate description of Methodology and Data	Appraised confidence level	
10. Findings	Appraised Relevance to stated research problem	
11. Conclusion	Appraised confidence level	
12. Data Sources	Triangulation	
13. Longitudinal Reach	Short term or Long term observations of results	
14. Research Purpose	Appraised Congruence or Bias	
15. Military Branch	Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines	
16. Military Rank	Officer or Enlisted	
17. Tenure	Initial term of service (less than 8 years) strongly preferred	
18. Socio-political Conditions	Drawdown period, transition, force reductions, growth, or expansion	

NOTE: Inclusion criteria in a meta-analysis focused on meta-interpretation are heavily dependent on researcher's interpretation of the findings.

Source: Created by author.

The case studies were examined to form the generalized hypotheses for application of P-O Fit in the United States Army during officer accessions, thus providing a context for the interpretation of the findings. In a meta-interpretation, differences are highlighted and attempts are made to explain them. Therefore, the findings, results, and discussion sections of chapter 4 will address differences and possible explanations for them. The commonalities among the case studies form the domains for structured examination to test the research questions. The data and conclusions will be analyzed to determine if the methods of research influenced the outcome or if the researcher bias played a significant role in the conclusions. Ambiguities and contrasting or conflicting outcomes will be closely examined to determine if the outcomes were a result of research methodology and need further study or a variance within P-O fit application.

The commonalities identified in existing research include positive correlation between P-O fit and values congruence with retention, turnover intention, organizational commitment, and job satisfaction. The application of P-O fit is identified as the variable within the paradigm that can be manipulated to reach the goal of increased retention for the officer corps of the United States Army.

P-O fit's effectiveness will be evaluated within the context of the organizational culture and other possible interactive or mediating factors to determine if the application of a P-O fit system could significantly impact the retention rates of officers across the three major groupings of basic branches in the Army. Influencing factors are the variables in the published literature that were found to affect the relationship between P-O fit and retention, either by increasing or decreasing the size of the relationship or changing the nature of the relationship, such as changing the relationship from a positive to a negative.

Correlation values are considered to be statistical indicators of the strength or predictive value between two factors. They range from 0 to 1.0 and are described as very strong, strong, moderate, weak, or negligible. The description of a correlation value depends on factors such as sample size, but generally, a value exceeding 0.40 is considered very strong, and one less than 0.10 is considered a neglible relationship. The strength of a correlation value is independent of its direction. Therefore, a value of -0.35 is equal in strength to 0.35. The positive relation implies a direct relationship: as one factor increases, the likelihood of the other also increases. For example, a correlation value of 0.41 between P-O fit and job satisfaction indicates a very strong likelihood that as P-O fit or job satisfaction increases, so will the perception of the other. A negative value indicates an inverse relationship. As one variable increases, the other is expected to decrease. Therefore, a negative correlation value between P-O fit and retention suggests that if P-O fit decreases, the likelihood of an employee leaving the organization increases. Turnover intention may be measured as intent to stay, retention, or intent to leave the organization, but the strength of the relationship is the information of value in this study (Taylor 1990, 36). The research will be examined independently (civilian and military) and then compared (civilian to military) to determine factors that exist for military cultures that either do not exist in civilian sample populations or have not been studied enough to draw meaningful conclusions for the Army officer corps.

Research Studies Inclusion Risks and
Resulting Research Questions

An effort was made to consider cross-cultural studies to examine the generalizing effect of the concept of P-O fit on various cultures. Sample sizes varied between 204 and

11,035. Organizational outcomes in relation to organizational values, person-organization fit, self-concept job fit, meaningful work, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intention, retention, and intent to stay were included. Some studies reported direct measures or correlations of fit. If the specific data was unreported, the inclusion exception was made based on the following criteria, in order of weighted importance: (1) relevance of research question, (2) relevance of sample population, (3) relevance of work outcomes evaluated, and (4) duration of effect. After evaluating the studies, twelve studies were included in the meta-analysis.

The lack of longitudinal research on the concept of P-O fit is assessed as a moderate concern for the conclusions reached in this meta-analysis. The risk is mitigated in this study by the focus on the retention of officers between years three and eight of their officer service contracts. Officers voluntarily released from active duty service during years three through eight of their career were assigned to a population of officers that the application of P-O fit may have been able to retain.

Only published case studies will be included in the meta-analysis. The coding system depicted in table 5 systematically examines the research for an appraisal of the research parameters to exclude research that demonstrates bias, conclusions not supported by the data gained, or influenced by factors to the point of reduced internal or external validity. Discrepancies will be evaluated to ascertain the effect of research methodology on those discrepancies.

The research is sufficient to determine an assessed correlation and therefore prediction, of the effect P-O fit would have on officer retention, using a generalization of the current body of research on P-O Fit, values congruence, demands-abilities, and their

correlation to job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intention. Existing literature demonstrates a relationship between fit and retention. What has not been demonstrated in previous research is whether the conditions can be replicated in the United States Army officer corps. Therefore the research questions posited in this meta-analysis are:

Primary Research Question: Can the principles of P-O fit be applied to initial officer selection and accession to a basic branch in the United States Army to positively impact retention in the officer corps?

R1. Can the influence of fit on retention found in existing fit literature be replicated in the U.S. Army officer corps to decrease voluntary attrition?

R2. Are there mediators that influence the relationship between P-O fit and retention in the U.S. Army?

R3. Can selecting personnel based on values important to the Army decrease voluntary attrition?

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Context for the Meta-Analysis

Support or refutation for the research questions is found in the comparison and contrast of civilian and military research studies on the effects of P-O fit, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment on retention. Key relationships detailed in chapter 2 formed the context for the comparisons of research in this meta-analysis. Specifically, the desired characteristics of the Army leader were defined and categorized in relation to the Army Values. Next, the Organizational Cultural Profile (OCP), a pre-existing method to measure the concept of fit, was applied to the desired characteristics, establishing the feasibility of obtaining a baseline measurement of P-O fit for Army officer candidates. The OCP has a proven relationship to desired organizational outcomes, also categorized according to relationships with the Army Values in table 4.

A model of P-O fit's effect on turnover was developed and displayed in figure 7. The model included the mediating factors of job satisfaction and organizational commitment on the relationship between fit and turnover, but the role of mediating and influencing factors was theorized as secondary to the direct relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention. The literature review presented in chapter 2 supports the existence of significant correlations between P-O fit, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover. In the meta-analysis, research studies were compared to determine the specific factors that influence perceptions of P-O fit, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment to decrease voluntary attrition. Once identified, these factors could be used

to develop an assessment tool for P-O fit within the framework established in chapter 2 of the Army Values and desired characteristics of the Army leader.

Research Study Selection

Social science and Army research databases provided the case studies used in the meta-analysis. The following key words were used to screen studies: person-organization fit, values congruence, organizational culture, person-environment, demands-abilities fit, and organizational values. Turnover intention (voluntary or involuntary plans to remain or depart a position or organization) was the work outcome sought for inclusion in the study, but job satisfaction and organizational commitment were included due to the established relationship between these factors and turnover intention and the lack of direct study of P-O-fit on military populations. As previously published civilian studies conducted an extensive meta-analysis of existing data prior to 2005 (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman and Johnson 2005), civilian studies published after 2005 were preferred.

Case study relevance was evaluated within the framework of organizational origin (private or public sector, education setting), organizational size, research purpose, longitudinal reach of the case study, and the sociocultural context influencers. Factors were not weighted, but the last four were applied to the evaluation of military studies only (military branch, military rank, tenure, and socio-political conditions).

The Combined Arms Center Research Library consolidated body of research served as the primary academic source for research studies. The collection includes major research databases such as EBSCOHost, ProQuest, JSTOR, SocINDEX, and Defense Technical Information Center (DTIC). Searching "person-organization fit" in all available databases and limiting results to journal articles and government documents

yielded 14,190 results. Limiting results to those published in 2005 to present reduced the volume of studies to 6,644. Combining "person-organization fit" and "retention" produced 775 results.

Studies on the health care profession were excluded based on the previous refinement of target population from chapter 2, where personnel in specialty branches were considered as self-select for person-vocation fit and may skew the results for personnel assigned to the basic branches. Studies examining related concepts such as person-environment fit, person-group fit, and person-supervisor fit were not included to avoid distorted results generated by a related concept. The relationships of P-O fit to personality, leadership, culture, and performance were generally excluded to narrow focus to retention, although Sheridan's study was included based on the high score it received on the criterion value rating system presented in table 5. Studies used within the literature review developed the base of knowledge and development of research questions and were excluded from the meta-analysis.

Studies were further screened for the relevance of the research question and similarity of sample population demographics. Homogeneity within civilian research sample demographic variables such as age, tenure, and education levels were considered positive for meta-analysis inclusion. Diversity in work field was also considered positive to increase the ability to generalize the results across different branches within the military.

Availability of research studies on the application of P-O fit to the selection of military personnel was limited. In order to assess the affect of P-O fit on military populations, mediating factors between P-O fit and turnover intention were considered.

Although the mediating factors do not prove a correlation between P-O fit and retention, they can provide indicators of values that can lead to a fit assessment tool. The literature review in chapter 2 identified a predictive relationship between job satisfaction and commitment on turnover intention. Therefore, case studies on the effects of factors that influence job satisfaction and organizational commitment were preferred. Case studies that did not include junior officers among the sample were excluded. The wide variance in terminology for factors used in the military studies (discussed more in chapters 4 and 5) limited the number of studies deemed manageable to allow adequate time for the researcher to conduct a thorough examination and reflection on interpretation results.

		Table 6. Studies Included in Meta-Analysis	
Authors	**Year**	**Title**	**Inclusion Value**
CIVILIAN RESEARCH			
1. Sheridan, John. E.	1992	Organizational Culture and Employee Retention	59 (median 4.21)
2. Da Silva, Nancy; Hutcheson, Jennifer; Wahl, Gregory D.	2010	Organizational Strategy and Employee Outcomes: A Person-Organization Fit Perspective	57 (median 4.07)
3. Arbour Simone; Kwantes, Catherine T.; Kraft, Joanna M.; Boglarsky, Cheryl A.	2014	Person-Organization Fit: Using Normative Behaviors to Predict Workplace Satisfaction, Stress, and Intentions to Stay	54 (median 3.86)
4. Liu, Bangcheng; Liu, Jianxin; Hu, Jin	2010	Person-Organization Fit, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intention: An Empirical Study in the Chinese Public Sector	51 (median 3.64)
5. Scroggins, Wesley A.	2008	The Relationship Between Employee Fit Perceptions, Job Performance, and Retention: Implications of Perceived Fit	48 (median 3.43)
6. McCulloch, Malcolm C. and Turban, Daniel B.	2007	Using Person-Organization Fit to Select Employees for High-Turnover Jobs	44 (median 3.14)
MILITARY RESEARCH			
7. Baughman, James D. and Darnell, Michael L.	1982	An Investigation of the Effects of Pay Inequity, Organizational Commitment, and Job Satisfaction on Career Intent	85 (median 4.72)
8. Vrooman, Roger M.	1976	An Analysis of Factors Associated with the Job Satisfaction and Career Intent of Air Force Personnel With Less than Six Years of Service	84 (median 4.66)
9. Gencer, Umit	2002	An Analysis Of Factors Affecting The Retention Plans Of Junior Male U.S. Army Officers: Evidence From The 1999 DOD Survey Of Active Duty Personnel	82 (median 4.55)
10. Sullivan, Daniel J.	1998	Job Satisfaction among United States Navy and Marine Corps Aviation Officers – a Study of the Impact on Career Retention	82 (median 4.55)
11. Dunn, John T. and Feiler, John P.	1983	A Model of United States Air Force Turnover	81 (median 4.5)
12. Griffith, Janet; Rakoff, Stuart H.; and Helms, Robert F.	1992	United States Army Research Institute for the Behavioral and Social Sciences Technical Report 951: Family and Other Impacts on Retention	79 (median 4.39)

NOTE: Inclusion values represent the total score of a study, using the method outlined in Chapter 3. Median values are included to provide an understanding of the consistency of values within each category. The highest value assigned to any single category was 5. The studies are sorted in the table from highest overall inclusion value to lowest, categorized by civilian or military sample populations.

Source: Created by author.

Findings And Results

Research on Civilian Populations

Chapter 2 described the employer-employee relationship from three perspectives: cognitive, values, and contextual. The cognitive perspective examined relevant theories and ideas about organizational relationships. The values perspective moves the theories and ideas toward application through research in controlled settings. The contextual perspective seeks to apply the theories and ideas supported through research to reap the benefits in the form of desired organizational outcomes. The civilian research examined in this meta-analysis spanned the values and contextual perspectives with a goal of deriving implications for the Army. Six studies conducted research on 2,321 subjects in the United States and China. The smallest sample was 204 (Scroggins 2008, 63); largest sample was 904 (Sheridan 1992, 1040). The shortest reported tenure of subjects was 1.8 years average (McCulloch and Turban 2007, 66) and the longest was 10 years inclusive (Arbour et al. 2014, 50).

Overall Findings

The research on civilian populations found that fit, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay were positively correlated (Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl 2010, 151-4; Liu, Liu, and Hu 2010, 619-23; Scroggins 2008, 64-5; McCulloch and Turban 2007, 67-8). Additionally, findings concluded perception of fit led to higher levels of organizational commitment, which was correlated with intention to stay (Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl 2010, 151-2). In one study, job satisfaction was also determined to be a strong mediator between P-O fit and turnover intention. P-O fit was correlated to turnover intention at a value of -0.351, and to job satisfaction at a value of

0.463. Job satisfaction correlated directly to turnover intention with a correlation value of

-0.581 (Liu, Liu, and Hu 2010, 620). Influencing factors on satisfaction, commitment,

and fit included meaningful and emotionally satisfying work experiences (Scroggins

2008, 58), age and tenure (Liu, Liu, and Hu 2010, 621), feedback (Sheridan 1992, 1041),

stability, innovation (Sheridan 1992, 1043), gender, marital status (Sheridan 1992, 1042),

job alternatives (Sheridan 1992, 1042; Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl 2010, 148) and

pay (Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl 2010, 150).

Possible Mediators Between P-O Fit and Retention

       The research studies examined the relationship of P-O fit and retention to other

factors, such as performance, job alternatives, cognitive ability, and organizational

culture. The synthesis of findings determined performance, job alternatives, and cognitive

ability were not significant mediators of the relationship between P-O fit and turnover

intention, but culture did have an impact on perception of fit and retention. McCulloch

and Turban found a minimum correlation between P-O fit and job performance (2007,

67). Scroggins found a minimum correlation between job performance and turnover

intention ($r = -0.12$, $p < 0.05$), but a higher correlation between job performance and fit ($r

= 0.26$, $p < 0.01$) (2008, 64). Sheridan found strong performers are likely to remain in an

organization, regardless of culture (1992, 1049). Cognitive ability was positively related

to job performance ratings ($r = 0.23$, $p < 0.001$) and negatively related to job satisfaction

($r = -.0.15$, $p < 0.01$) in McCulloch and Turban (2007, 67). Da Silva, Hutcheson, and

Wahl found organizational commitment negated the effect of job alternatives in retention

decisions (2010, 153-5). Therefore, performance, job alternatives, and cognitive ability

were excluded as mediating factors between P-O fit and retention.

Impact of Culture. The civilian research findings lead to a conclusion that culture matters when achieving desired outcomes, such as retention. Culture could play a mediating role on the impact of P-O fit and therefore, retention. Expectations of fit and culture can be assessed through a P-O fit tool. However, if fit is not measured or obtained during the selection process, the organizational culture can still positively impact retention through the process of socialization. Socialization requires time. Therefore, an officer that may perceive a lack of P-O fit during the initial mandatory service period may increase in perception of fit through organizational socialization and decide to remain on active duty after the initial service obligation. The necessary, but unrenewable, resource in that process is time, but the military may fare better than the civilian organizations, due to the mandatory service obligations. Civilian research showed the additional time gained through culture can provide an organization additional time to conduct socialization of members, leading to increased tenure and commitment, both shown to positively affect retention. Cultures that emphasize interpersonal relationships retained employees significantly longer (14 months, difference from 31-45 months) than those that emphasize work tasks (Sheridan 1992, 1048). Although culture did not seem to directly mediate the relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention, it influences fit through its impact on job satisfaction and commitment. Organizations that espouse values that differ from the practiced ones benefit from an examination of culture and its unintended outcomes to understand the impact of their culture on satisfaction and commitment. As presented in chapter 2, the Army has a well-defined set of values but a less clearly defined metric for determining the desired characteristics of its leaders. The risk in such a gap or discrepancy is revealed through a perception of misfit or lack of

commitment or satisfaction stemming from the difference in expectations and actual

culture of the organization. For example, the research showed a culture that promotes

individual growth and creativity encourages employees to pursue excellence, think in

unique and independent ways, perform well, and help others grow and develop correlated

to the highest levels of job satisfaction and intent to stay. Conversely, cultures that

emphasize bureaucracy, traditionalism, and hierarchal control result in conformity at the

expense of effectiveness and reduce initiative, flexibility, and decision-making, all

desired characteristics of the Army leader (Arbour et al. 2014, 46-8). Although culture

indirectly mediates the relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention through

satisfaction and commitment, the findings of the meta-analysis do not support a direct

mediating effect. Although the findings imply the culture can increase perception of fit

through socialization, a lack of direct proven relationship between P-O fit, organizational

culture, and retention plus the negating effect of mandatory service obligations of the

military member excludes culture from categorization as a direct mediating factor

between P-O fit and retention for military personnel.

Implications

The research provides evidence for the relationship between P-O fit and retention,

as well as the relationships between P-O fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover

intention. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment emerged as prominent

mediators of the relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention. The findings on

other possible mediators imply the Army can mediate the lack of P-O fit through a focus

on factors that contribute most heavily to satisfaction and commitment, rather than on

factors that do not predict turnover intention. For example, the Army's current selection

process often places heavy emphasis on cognitive ability through assessment of education, grade point averages, and scores on tests of cognitive ability administered during the application process. As the research failed to establish a strong correlation between cognitive ability and satisfaction, it is not likely to be a good predictor of perception of fit. Additionally, cognitive ability did correlate with performance, but performance did not significantly correlate with satisfaction or fit, so performance evaluations may indicate future performance ability, but are likely to be poor predictors turnover intention. Understanding the factors that influence the effects of perceptions of fit assist leaders in effectively allocating resources to achieve the desired outcomes of retention of the right people.

Military Research

The meta-analysis included six studies on the factors influencing job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention in the Unites States military. As previously stated, research on P-O fit and the U.S. military was severely limited, so studies examining the relationships of satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention were analyzed to extract similarities and differences between mediating and influencing factors affecting fit perception and retention in civilian and military research. When made possible by the separation of data and results, the meta-analysis was limited to data on officers in the rank of O-3 or junior officers. Five of the studies produced a total aggregate sample size of 4,203 junior officers. The largest study did not provide data on the number of participants by rank, but reported a total of 11,035 participants in the ranks of E-2 through O-6. Although the number of participants was not reported by rank in this

sixth and largest study, results were reported by rank (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 10).

A notable characteristic of the military studies was that each examined the retention problem from the perspective of the individual employee. The studies analyzed effects of influencing variables on the satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention of the employee. It is important to note that these results present only one side of a P-O fit equation. The importance of each factor to the organization must also be considered to establish a measure of fit or congruence.

Research Trends

The meta-analysis revealed patterns within the factors valued by past or current members of the military organizations. Remarkable consistency existed within the results, which spanned three decades. A possible explanation for the consistency is the military has undergone very little organizational change; therefore, the same employee-employer dynamics have been persisting for three decades. Another possible explanation is researcher validity and bias. Results are found only for the characteristics measured. If the studies are based on the same body of literature within the field of industrial-organizational psychology, the variables within the studies are also likely to resemble one another. The studies shared the same employee-centric bias as well. Additionally, some analysis and results were reported on males married to civilian spouses only, thereby precluding the generalization of all results to females, dual-military, single, or single parent Soldiers, as each of these groups may have slightly different results in weighted importance of variables.

<u>P-O Fit Within Military Research</u>

Since P-O fit was not explicitly named as a concept measured in the research, the studies were screened for factors or concepts that shared characteristics of P-O fit. The concepts with descriptions similar to those that establish P-O fit included: attitude toward career field, the best predictor of job satisfaction in Baughman and Darnell (1982, 30; 45); being able to use one's abilities (Vrooman 1976, 53), expectations prior to accession (Gencer 2002, 35), expectation of an exciting or challenging job (Sullivan 1998, 51), level of camaraderie (Sullivan 1998, 47-8), psychological identification with work (job involvement) (Dunn and Feiler 1983, 15) and values congruence (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 44-8). The results and findings of the research studies are presented in the same manner as the civilian studies: overall conclusions, mediating or influencing factors, other possible mediating factors, and implications for the organization.

<u>Overall Findings</u>

The overriding finding within the military studies was interdependence between variables that influence commitment, satisfaction, and turnover intention. No single variable emerged as an independent predictor of satisfaction, commitment, or turnover intentions. Factors were combined to reach the desired outcomes. Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms concluded retention intention is a function of soldier's sense of emotional connection to the Army and assessment of Army life benefits (1992, 33).

Another distinguishing factor of military studies is the clear turnover intention that exists upon entry into the organization. The data on captains in the Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms study suggest a majority of captains enter the organization with plans to remain for 20 or more years or are open to consider remaining in the organization for 20

or more years (1992, B-34). Gencer found that almost two-thirds of the officers indicated unlikely or neutral intent to remain on active duty after the initial service obligation (2002, 26), while Sullivan noted, "prior to completing their period of mandatory service, most service members have already carefully weighed their career options and most will carry through with their intended behavior" (1998, 77). Gencer and Sullivan's findings supports the effect of mediating factors on turnover decisions in the absence of a P-O fit predictive tool.

The civilian research body examined the influence of a standard set of limited predictor variables on P-O fit and turnover intention, some of which were listed above as possible mediating factors. The military research was much more in-depth, seeking the influence of more than twenty variables in some studies (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 40; Sullivan 1998, 20-1). Another used as many as four different methods of regression analysis to analyze results of almost twenty variables (Vrooman 1976). The sheer volume of variables considered in the research increased the likelihood of missed connections between predictor variables and their outcome on retention. For example, most studies found a complex and mutually supporting relationship among satisfaction, commitment, and retention variables, with very little evidence for independent effects. Dunn and Feiler found very little evidence for the inter-correlation between the effects of personal factors and the task characteristics on turnover intention (1983, 40). In Dunn and Feiler's study, personal factors included age, gender, education, and organizational level (1983, 18). Task characteristics included autonomy, feedback (instrumental communication), task significance (amount of impact one's job has on others), task identity (the extent to which employees do an entire or whole piece of work and can clearly identify the results of their

efforts), and skill variety (routinization, repetitiveness, or variety in skills required by the job) (Dunn and Feiler 1983, 11-14,1).

<u>Satisfaction and Commitment in Military Research</u>

Dunn and Feiler identified a high level of correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction (0.64) and a lack of direct correlation between predictor variables (age, sex, education, organizational level, skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback) and criterion variable (turnover intention) (1983, 49, 41); implying the importance of the mediating variables of satisfaction and commitment (mediating variables examined in the study). Dunn and Feiler also found job satisfaction and organizational commitment were the most significant predictors of turnover intention ($r = 0.103$) (1983, 40-1). Officers that reported greater than median positive responses on job satisfaction variables also reported high levels (extremely or quite good) of affect (measure of commitment) toward staying in the Army beyond their current obligation, providing more support for the high correlation between satisfaction and commitment (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 53).

Sometimes the results of the military research seemed contradictory and confusing. Meta-analysis provided an important method for establishing meaningful interpretation of the findings. One study found a significant correlation only between organizational commitment and turnover intention and an insignificant correlation between job satisfaction and turnover intention (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 47); while others found job satisfaction to be the primary factor of turnover intention (Vrooman 1976, 32; Sullivan 1998, 78). Dunn and Feiler found organizational commitment to be a better predictor of turnover intention than job satisfaction (1983, 40). The variables

assigned to satisfaction or commitment were not standardized throughout the research. The varied terminology and lack of standardized testing resulted in overlap between variables tested for satisfaction and those tested for commitment. The overlap could explain the apparently conflicting results, but the bottom line is satisfaction and commitment were certainly correlated to turnover intention in military populations. If a direct and positive correlation exists between these two variables and between these variables and retention, the Army would be advised to address the predictor variables (influencing factors) associated with satisfaction and commitment when developing retention policies.

The "relative priority the soldier places on work and family rewards, and the perception of close agreement between personal and Army values are factors that are also likely to affect soldier commitment to the Army and Army retention" (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 33). Organizational commitment was strongly influenced by family support, patriotism, social involvement, and career mobility (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 44). Organizational commitment was measured as a reflection of affect, or how someone "feels" about the organization in Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms (1992, 52-56). They found perceptions of community quality, family, and personal time (workload) significantly influenced affect toward the Army. Commitment tends to rise with tenure, and can override the effects of dissatisfaction for military personnel (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms, 1992, ix). Sullivan found some evidence to suggest officers that declare job satisfaction variables are the most important factors upon entering an organization would consider staying in an organization due to the influence of organizational commitment factors (1998, 53-55).

Satisfaction was strongly influenced by attitude toward career field, job alternatives, routinization of tasks, patriotism, and formal education level (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 45). Vrooman found job challenge level, being able to use one's abilities (making full use of individual abilities, chance to further potential), preparation for future responsibility, personal standing (treated with respect), and leadership quality combined to produce job satisfaction; job challenge was estimated as twice as important as any other factor (1976, 61). Gencer found the most universal single factor the organization offered that had positively impacted satisfaction was job security (2002, 28), while Sullivan found it to be level of camaraderie (1998, 47, 53).

Gencer found other important variables influencing satisfaction were career mobility, military values, assignments (job enjoyment/challenge), and preparation for future responsibility and development (2002, 28-9). Sullivan also named retirement benefits and working hours as significant predictors of job satisfaction in the military (1998, 45-46). Army work rewards, such as career mobility, leadership quality, opportunities to make use of abilities, opportunities to serve country, experience excitement or adventure, and job security significantly impacted satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 39-42).

Possible Mediators Between P-O Fit and Retention

The difference between expectations and actual experiences was shown to affect perceptions of significance and fit and turnover intention (Gencer 2002, 41-5, 52; Dunn and Feiler 1983, 33). Gencer found workload, personal time, and job enjoyment are critically important factors to the employee in determining satisfaction. Each of these are intrinsic factors, easily manipulated by the organization and were critically important to

the employee, but the officers in his study rated the Army's performance as low on all of them (2002, 49). Perhaps these officers experienced a different reality from the expected environment created prior to joining the organization. Sullivan noted the prospects of an exciting job, a challenging job, prestige or stature attained from serving, and the opportunity for career development strongly influenced individuals to join the military. These same characteristics influenced their turnover decisions (1998, 49-53). Additionally, Sullivan's findings specified that family, work dissatisfaction, pay, low opportunities for professional development, and leadership quality are the primary reasons to leave the military, highlighting the importance of job satisfaction and opportunities for professional development in selecting and remaining in the military service. Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms identified similar reasons for joining and staying in the Army: opportunity to serve the country, training for profession, retirement benefits, job security, and opportunity to travel (1992, 5-6). These results may indicate the expectations of the officers prior to accession were not realistic or that the environment of the organization changed due to security and deployment demands. In either circumstance, a P-O fit tool could screen against unrealistic expectations and recruits that are less likely to adapt to changing circumstances. Additional implications for the Army include the possibility of shifting priorities with age and tenure. Family, pay, career development, and leadership may be a lower priority during the selection phase, but increase in importance during the performance phase of employment.

Numerous other factors were analyzed for effect on turnover intention, but evidence for inclusion as mediating factors was not found within the meta-analysis. So these factors remain acknowledged influencers of satisfaction, commitment, and

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retention. Turnover intention was directly influenced by tenure, sex, age group, and career mobility and indirectly through factors related to organizational commitment (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 51). Vrooman found that turnover intention was significantly influenced by being able to use one's abilities, but also indirectly affected by the factors of job satisfaction, especially leadership quality (1976, 53, 85). Job security was cited as an especially influential factor of turnover intention among officers during their initial term of service (Gencer 2002, 28). Gencer also noted the importance of family, promotion potential, tenure, and job alternatives on retention decisions. Sullivan named job stability, job security, working hours, retirement benefits, and satisfaction with co-workers as significant factors influencing turnover intention (2002, 53-54). Organizational level was also suggested as a good predictor of turnover intention (Dunn and Feiler 1983, 42; Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 34-5, 60). Family support was identified as a critical factor in turnover intention (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 58-60).

Experience (tenure), job alternatives, pay, and a general comparison of military to civilian life were also identified as a possible mediating factors. Baughman and Darnell theorized that filling positions with inexperienced personnel led to frustration, decreased satisfaction and increased attrition rates (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 2-3), which they measured through the effect of tenure and pay equality. While tenure was found to be directly linked to turnover intention, pay was not found to be a significant predictor of turnover intention (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 39). Job alternatives was considered as a mediating factor, but considered as negligible, except when considered as an indirect influencer of turnover intention through organizational commitment (Baughman and

Darnell 1982, 48-52). Gencer found an overwhelming positive expectation of availability of job alternatives in the civilian sector, but job security of the military negated the effect (2002, 27-28, 36). Only 13 percent of captains reported pay as an important factor in determining retention decisions, while 53 percent reported it was not most important (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 49, B-153). 60.4 percent of captains that showed a positive perception of quality of Army life indicated a high probability of remaining in the Army (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 48, B-134). Therefore, tenure, job alternatives, pay and a comparison of military to civilian life remain categorized as influencing factors of perceptions of fit, satisfaction, or commitment and indirect influencers of turnover intention.

Implications

The consistencies in value placed on specific factors that determine satisfaction and turnover intent, direct effects of satisfaction and commitment, and indirect effects of other variables and factors on turnover intention suggest the Army has the ability to develop a profile for P-O fit. The military research was primarily employee-centric, and the important factors influencing employee satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention emerged. However, the next step in the process of P-O fit application is to identify the importance of these factors to the organization. Determining relationships between the influencing or mediating factors, desired characteristics of the Army leader, and the Army values will help to clarify employment decisions from the perspective of an organization experiencing a drawdown in resources. If numbers of applicants exceed openings, an organization benefits from an array of tools to select the right employees. Leadership, interconnectedness, teamwork, support, and fair evaluations during the initial

service obligation period seem important in the initial stages of military employment. Once the initial service period expires, other factors may elevate in importance during retention decisions, such as age, tenure, family concerns, and meaningful work experiences.

<p style="text-align:center">Discussion</p>

The examination of research reveals trends that support the research questions posited in this study. Civilian and military studies were compared to determine significant similarities, differences, predictor variables, and influencing factors for variables related to retention (turnover). P-O fit, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment each have a significant correlation with turnover intention (the most significant predictor of actual voluntary attrition behavior). Additionally, the effects of P-O fit are mediated by job satisfaction and organizational commitment to decrease turnover intention. The meta-analysis findings include (1) parallels between civilian and military research findings of the impact of satisfaction and commitment on turnover; (2) identification of key differences between civilian and military workforce populations related to fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover; and (3) identification of employee and organizational factors that contribute to perception of fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention.

Primary Research Question: Can the principles of P-O fit be applied to initial officer selection and accession to a basic branch in the United States Army to positively impact retention in the officer corps?

Secondary Research Question 1: Can the influence of fit on retention found in existing fit literature be replicated in the U.S. Army officer corps to decrease voluntary attrition?

The meta-analysis produced parallels between civilian and military retention research in the impact of fit (or related concepts), commitment, and satisfaction on turnover intention that supports an affirmative response to the primary research question and secondary research question 1. All civilian research examined in this meta-analysis identified significant correlation of P-O fit or values congruence to turnover intention. Correlation values of fit with turnover intention included findings of 0.104 (constructive culture) (Arbour, et al. 2014, 56), 0.23 (Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl 2010, 150), -0.351 (Liu, Liu, and Hu 2010, 620), 0.36 (McCulloch and Turban 2008, 64), and -0.56 (Scroggins 2008, 64), supporting the literature review on the relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention presented in chapter 2. The military research did not specifically correlate the concept of P-O fit to turnover intention, but similar concepts were measured in all six studies and each found a relationship between the concept and turnover intention.

The concepts with characteristics similar to P-O fit included attitude toward career field (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 30), being able to use one's abilities (Vrooman 1976, 53), expectations prior to accession (Gencer 2002, 35), expectation of an exciting or challenging job (Sullivan 1998, 51), levels of camaraderie (Sullivan 1998, 47-8), psychological identification with work (job involvement) (Dunn and Feiler 1983, 15) and values congruence (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 44-8). Attitude toward career field (reflecting the level of satisfaction when assigned branch or job did not match the desired

branch or job of the individual) was the best predictor of job satisfaction (0.66) in one study (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 45). Being able to use one's abilities was correlated to turnover intention only slightly less than satisfaction as a stand alone variable in another study (Vrooman 1976, 35). Differences in actual experiences from expectations prior to accession was listed as the cause of almost 10 percent of the voluntary losses of junior officers in Gencer's study (2002, 52). The expectation of an exciting or challenging job influence satisfaction for over 75 percent of the officers surveyed in Sullivan's study (1998, 44), while level of camaraderie (esprit de Corps, ie. fitting in with the assigned group) was noted as one of the most influential factors for job satisfaction (1998, 47). Job involvement (the degree to which a person is psychologically identified with his or her work) was highly correlated with job satisfaction and organizational commitment, sharing similar predictive variables of feedback, autonomy, and variety (Dunn and Feiler 1983, 36-7). Values congruence was measured through questions addressing the alignment of soldier values with Army Values. Not surprisingly, soldiers that indicated a high perception of agreement between their individual values and those of the Army also indicated high probability to remain in the Army. Over two-thirds (67.7 percent) of those scoring greater than median on measures of values congruence indicated a high probability to remain in the Army, compared to only 12.2 percent of the captains that scored below median on values congruence variables (Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 46-7, B-137). These findings support the conclusion that the concept of P-O fit can be used with a military population to positively impact retention.

Secondary Research Question 2: Are there mediators that influence the relationship between P-O fit and retention in the U.S. Army?

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The findings of the meta-analysis provide strong support for the affirmative response to Secondary Research Question 2. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment emerged as two dominant mediating factors on the relationship between P-O fit and retention. Job satisfaction was almost universally connected to P-O fit, with the exception of one civilian case study that did not mention job or work satisfaction as a factor of retention, but implied the effect of satisfaction through measurement of work tasks, interpersonal relationships, and individual actions (Sheridan 1992) and one military study that did not find a statistically significant relationship between satisfaction and turnover intention (Baughman and Darnell 1982, 47). Regardless of the source of research, all studies that examined organizational commitment's correlation to turnover intention established organizational commitment as a significant predictor of turnover intention. Half of the studies (60 percent of military studies) included in the meta-analysis examined the affect of organizational commitment on turnover intention: Sheridan 1992; Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl 2010; Baughman and Darnell 1982; Sullivan 1998; Dunn and Feiler 1983; and Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992.

Although the notion that job satisfaction and organizational commitment lead to retention seems intuitive, the factors that lead to satisfaction and commitment are not as clear. The research analyzed more than forty factors and their effects on satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention. The significant finding was that the mediating factors of job satisfaction and commitment play a crucial role in the outcome of turnover intention. In civilian research, a clear linkage between fit and retention was established. The military research findings were less linear in nature, implying the mediating factors of satisfaction and commitment may augment, support, or eclipse the impact of fit. A

person satisfied with their job may also elect to remain in a military organization, regardless of perception of fit. In other words, an individual can be committed to an organization and intend to stay, even when satisfaction is low. However, the true cost of relying on commitment's influence on turnover intention lies in the loss of intangible positive effects on personnel perceiving a lack of fit or satisfaction.

Extracting the correlation of fit on retention within the military, independent from the mediating factors of satisfaction and commitment, was not possible within this meta-analysis. Therefore, the model presented in figure 7 was examined in reverse. The affects of satisfaction and commitment were determined to be indispensible to a successful military retention model that includes P-O fit. This analysis proved extremely beneficial because factors that influence satisfaction and commitment may also influence the perception of fit and more importantly, can be quantified and assessed to obtain P-O fit for the Army. For example, the opportunity for an exciting job was one influencing factor of satisfaction and commitment (Sullivan 1998, 50; Griffith, Rakoff, and Helms 1992, 39-42). The opportunity for an exciting job is also an expectation prior to accession for many officers (Sullivan 1998, 49). Expectations prior to employment are elements of fit perception and can be assessed during the selection process. A measurement of the congruence between the actual opportunities for an exciting job and the expectation of opportunities for an exciting job would be an element in a fit measurement tool. Therefore, identifying the most important factors for satisfaction and commitment may assist the Army in developing a predictive P-O fit tool.

What are the key variables or factors that influence satisfaction and commitment? Differences in civilian and military employee populations related to fit, satisfaction,

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commitment, and turnover for junior officer populations (or similar demographic variables in civilian populations) revealed the importance of job alternatives, family, job security, retirement benefits, and community on the turnover decisions made by an individual military service members. Research on civilian workforce populations established a direct relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention. The military research relationship was less definitively established or documented. One possible explanation for these findings is in the lack of study of P-O fit on military populations. Another explanation could be that within military populations, fit may be enhanced, supported, or eclipsed by the effects of satisfaction and commitment on turnover intention. The second explanation is supported by the relationship between P-O fit, organizational commitment, and retention in Da Silva, Hutcheson, and Wahl (2010, 151-4). Additional support can be found in the findings of key differences among factors affecting satisfaction and commitment within the military populations, such as job alternatives, family, job security, retirement benefits, and community.

In military research perception of job alternatives was shown to have less affect on turnover intention than fit (or concepts similar to fit), organizational commitment, or job satisfaction than in civilian research. Perhaps the difference lies in the mandatory service obligation nature of the military employment contract. Military retention decisions are not immediately executed, as they can be in civilian employment. The difference of family impact is inferred, as the civilian research body did not specifically examine the influence of family while the military research firmly established the influence of family factors on turnover intent.

Job security emerged as a reason to join the military and also a reason to remain in the military in several military studies. Retirement benefits are stable and expected for any service member completing a minimum number of years of service. Therefore, the expectation of retirement benefits differ from the somewhat transient or "at-will" nature of the civilian organizational research. Retirement benefits did not play a major role in the civilian research included in this meta-analysis. Community factors include neighborhoods, schools, child-care, commissaries, and Post Exchange services. Service members that perceived an advantage to the standard of living provided by the military community reported higher levels of intent to stay. Civilian organizations usually do not have the ability to affect these factors in order to recruit and retain quality workers.

These findings led to the conclusion that the affect of satisfaction and commitment as mediating factors of the relationship between P-O fit and retention in the Army is substantiated. Furthermore, the relationship provides extensive value to the Army in establishing a P-O fit assessment tool, using the sub-factors that influence perceptions of satisfaction and commitment as a basis for determining fit dimensions. Figure 7 was reviewed and modified to incorporate the increased importance of mediating factors (satisfaction and commitment) and key influencing factors. The updated model is presented in figure 8.

Selection Phase   Performance Phase   Outcome Phase

Mediating Factors

Job Satisfaction ↔ **Organizational Commitment**

Influencing Factors/ Opportunities

Attitude Toward Career Field (Baughman and Darnell, 1982)
Being able to use one's abilities (Vrooman, 1976; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Job challenge (Vrooman, 1976; Sullivan, 1998)
Job Security (Baughman and Darnell, 1982; Gencer, 2002, Sullivan, 1998; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Job Involvement (Dunn and Feiler, 1983; Scroggins, 2008)
Job Excitement (Sullivan, 1998; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992; Arbour et al., 2014)
Workload (Gencer, 2002, Sullivan, 1998)
Job enjoyment (Gencer, 2002)
Tenure (Baughman and Darnell, 1982; Gencer, 2002)
Job Autonomy (Dunn and Feiler, 1983; Arbour et al., 2014)
Level of camaraderie (Sullivan, 1998)
Feedback (Dunn and Feiler, 1983; Sheridan, 1992)
Preparation for future responsibility (Vrooman, 1976, Sullivan, 1998; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Leadership Quality (Vrooman, 1976; Sullivan, 1998; Sheridan, 1992; Arbour et al., 2014)

Job Involvement (Dunn and Feiler, 1983)
Family Support (Baughman and Darnell, 1982; Sullivan; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Career Mobility (Baughman and Darnell, 1982; Gencer, 2002; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Tenure (Baughman and Darnell, 1982; Gencer, 2002)
Retirement benefits (Baughman and Darnell, 1982; Sullivan, 1998; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Career development (Sullivan, 1998; Arbour et al., 2014)
Difference between expected and perceived conditions (Gencer, 2002)
Organizational level (Dunn and Feiler, 1983; Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Values (Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992)
Level of camaraderie, Teamwork (Griffith, Rakoff and Helms, 1992; Sheridan, 1982)

Socialization

P-O Fit Values Congruence   - - - Implied but Not Proven - - -   **Turnover Intention** Voluntary Retention
Recommended for further research

Influencing Factors/ Opportunities

Difference Between Ideal and Perceived Situation

Geography/ Employment Opportunities

Figure 8.   Updated Model of P-O Fit Impact on Voluntary Retention

Source: Created by author.

Secondary Research Question 3: Can selecting personnel based on values important to the Army decrease voluntary attrition?

The meta-analysis produced an affirmative response in support of secondary research question 3. Employee and organizational factors that contribute to perception of

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fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention were extensively evaluated in the research. The key influencing factors were presented in figure 8, but more than forty factors were extracted, categorized, and evaluated for links to the previously established relationships between Army Values, desired characteristics of an Army leader, OCP characteristics, and desired organizational outcomes. These forty factors are not equally important to the employee or the organization in determining retention decisions. The ranking of the importance of each reveals the value system of the prospective employees and the organization. One of the most important conclusions from this interpretation and meta-analysis is the true values set of the Army can be made known through the factors identified in the research. Once identified, the factors can be related to the Army values, incorporated in a P-O fit tool, and used to obtain a measure of fit for prediction of turnover intention, which can lead to better resource allocation.

From Influencing Factors to P-O Fit Assessment Tool

Civilian research examined a standardized set of factors to determine influence on turnover intention. Military research also examined a limited range of factors, but terminology varied widely. During the meta-analysis, factors were grouped as employee-centric or organization-centric to aid in conducting analyses and drawing conclusions. Each factor was evaluated for relation to the desired characteristics or OCP characteristics detailed in chapter 2, with a goal of relating the influencing factors of fit, satisfaction, and commitment to the Army Values. If used to form an OCP, the factors would emerge as weighted in importance to both the organization and the employees. The level of congruence between the two would provide an indicator of fit and possibly a predictor of retention decisions by both. The relationships between the influencing factors

and the previously noted measurable characteristics, outcomes, and Army Values support positive findings on secondary research question 3.

A demonstration of the method by which an influencing factor can become a piece of a P-O fit assessment tool helps clarify the assertions made in the preceding paragraph. Figure 9 presents a visual depiction of the process by which an variable found to be an influencing factor on job satisfaction or commitment in the meta-analysis could be used to develop a P-O fit assessment tool. Narrative explanation of figure 9 is included for additional clarification of conclusions reached through the meta-analysis concerning secondary research question 3.
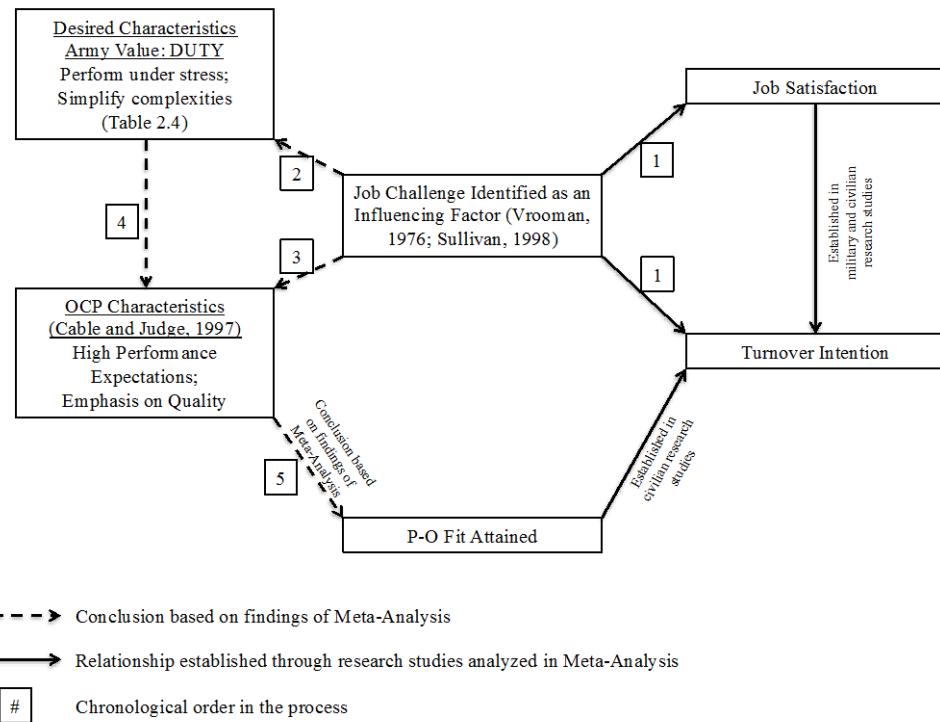
Figure 9.   Process By Which An Influencing Factor Can Develop
A P-O Fit Assessment Tool

Source: Created by author.

Table 1 presented desired characteristics of an Army leader, categorized by Army Values. Most characteristics fell within the value of duty, implying the importance of the value of duty to the Army. Job challenge was identified as a key influencing factor on job satisfaction and turnover intention (Vrooman 1976; Sullivan 1998). In figure 9, this relationship is indicated by the numeral one. According to table 3, the desired characteristics for Army leaders related to duty and job challenge were "perform under stress" and "simplify complexities". This relationship is identified in figure 9 as numeral two. OCP characteristics from the 40-item Cable and Judge OCP related to duty and job challenge were "high performance expectations" and "emphasis on quality", according to table 4; and indicated in figure 9 as numeral three.

Questions about performance expectations, quality of performance, stress, and task complexity could be inserted in a P-O fit assessment tool. Members of the organization and the prospective employee sort these characteristics in order of importance. A level of congruence between the organization's profile and the individual's assessment may reveal a level of fit within the value of duty. If duty values were heavily weighted in importance to the Army, a high congruence value suggests a high probability of fit, satisfaction, organizational commitment, and prediction of intent to stay, indicated by a dashed theoretical line and the numeral five in figure 9. This process can be repeated for all forty influencing factors examined within the meta-analysis studies.

The ability to relate the influencing factors of fit, satisfaction, and commitment to the Army Values for inclusion in a P-O fit tool support the research question, but imply the task of assessing values is not as straightforward as simply asking prospective officer candidates about their levels of agreement on the values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless

service, integrity, and personal courage. Obtaining an indirect and subjective measurement of the factors that contribute to the personification of the Army Values may result in an increased understanding of fit and lead to more effective employment decisions.

Summary

The civilian research found that fit, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay were positively correlated. Additionally, findings concluded a perception of fit led to higher levels of organizational commitment, which was correlated with intention to stay. Job satisfaction was also determined to be a strong mediator between P-O fit and turnover intention. The overriding finding within the military studies was interdependence between variables that influence commitment, satisfaction, and turnover intention. No single variable emerged as an independent predictor of satisfaction, commitment, or turnover intentions. Factors were combined to reach the desired outcomes, but job satisfaction and organizational commitment were the most significant predictors of turnover intention. A high level of correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction suggest their importance as the mediating variables of between fit and retention in military populations.

Other mediating variables were considered and excluded, but remain important as influencing factors on perceptions of fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention. In a military population, the key variables or influencing factors include, but are not limited to attitude toward career field, being able to use one's abilities, job challenge, job involvement, job excitement, job autonomy, job enjoyment, family support, career mobility, tenure, values, level of camaraderie, workload, feedback,

preparation for future responsibility, leadership quality, retirement benefits, and organizational level. The model of P-O fit and retention was modified to expand the role of the two predominant mediating factors firmly supported in both military and civilian research (figure 8). Although a direct relationship between fit and turnover intention exists in civilian research, it was not clearly established in military research. Therefore, the direct relationship was labeled as "implied, but unproven" in figure 9 and recommended for further research. The research questions were supported by the results of the meta-analysis. The findings of the meta-analysis strongly supported the primary research question and secondary research questions 1 and 2. The findings of the meta-analysis suggested a moderate support level for secondary research question 3.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Restated Purpose

The purpose of the research conducted in this thesis was to examine the potential affect of person-organization fit on voluntary retention of junior officers in the U.S. Army. Applying the concept of P-O fit during the selection process may result in improved prediction of turnover intention, allowing the Army to more efficiently invest resources in the right personnel. Achieving increased prediction and more efficient resource investment strategies within human capital requires an understanding of the relationship from the perspectives of the organization and the employee. Ideally, the two perspectives will align in key areas, such as values, to produce the desired results and outcomes for each. The Army may not be currently experiencing a retention problem. However, as the Army downsizes and increases reliance on human capital, the problem becomes selection and retention of the right people. The Army desired characteristics of the right personnel were identified through several key organizational sources in chapter 2. Identifying the characteristics and assessing prospective employees within this framework can lead to increased job satisfaction, increased organizational commitment, and decreased turnover intention.

The final chapter will present summary of the findings, results, and implications of the meta-analysis discussed in the previous chapter. The summary of findings, results, and implications will be followed by recommendations for further research and action, unanswered questions, and describe an alternate approach to addressing the Army's right people problem.

<u>Summary Of Findings And Results</u>

P-O Fit, Satisfaction, Commitment, and Turnover Intention

The meta-analysis results support the relationship between the concept of P-O fit and its positive impact on retention. Inclusion of the military research studies suggest the fundamental factors influencing fit and retention decisions apply to both military and civilian workforce populations, although the research suggests military employees value family, retirement, and community variables more so than civilian workforce populations. It was unclear whether the importance of family, retirement, and community variables outweigh other variables in determining turnover intention for military employees or if the Army also places high importance on these values.

The meta-analysis concluded fit, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to stay were positively correlated. Additionally, perception of fit led to higher levels of organizational commitment and job satisfaction, which were strongly correlated with intention to stay. These results mean P-O fit can be used to predict turnover intention. Even if fit is not initially assessed or obtained, job satisfaction can still influence commitment and turnover intention. Commitment can also influence job satisfaction and turnover intention. Therefore, satisfaction and commitment emerged as significant mediators of the relationship between P-O fit and turnover intention. In other words, if fit, satisfaction, or commitment levels are high, an employee is likely to remain in an organization. Obtaining all three should result in a stable and predictable work force, where the right personnel are in the right place at the right time for use by the Army.

A high level of correlation between organizational commitment and job satisfaction suggest their importance as the mediating variables of between fit and retention in military populations. Of course, the logical question following this conclusion is "what factors lead to satisfaction or commitment?" Significant overlaps between the influencing factors in military populations led to the conclusion factors are interdependent and the independent impact of each on turnover intention is difficult to determine. Factors combined to reach the desired outcomes and were remarkably consistent across three decades of research on satisfaction and commitment in the military populations. Once the Army knows the factors, retention strategies can be developed to retain the right people (right as determined by the Army).

A Better System for Retention Program Design

Traditionally, the Army invested resources on factors that influence satisfaction and commitment, such as job assignment, pay, promotion, and professional development opportunities. However, the conclusions of this meta-analysis propose a different approach to retention program design. Assume experienced and trained leaders are a commodity the Army wants to retain. In the past, these commodity personnel have been queried to determine their preferred incentives for retention. Retention programs based on this patchwork system of desires have been designed and implemented (expending valuable resources of money, manpower, and time). Is there a logical and proven alternate approach to avoid a patchwork system but obtain the same desired results?

The results of this study suggest the Army could identify employees most likely to perceive job satisfaction and exhibit organizational commitment BEFORE the individuals even enter the organization. Once these employees enter the organization, the

Army would reap the tangible and intangible benefits of satisfied and committed

employees. In a period of reduced resources and increased reliance on human capital, the

application of improved selection tools can assist the organization in selecting the right

personnel, thus making such an approach attractive and worthy of further consideration.

Initially, accessions may decrease, but selecting the right personnel for retention benefits

the organization by decreasing the costs associated with loss of experience, the valued

commodity mentioned above.

<center>Expectations for Army Leaders</center>

The Army's foundation for organizational culture and expectations of employee

behavior are the Army Values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, integrity, and

personal courage. Each value encompasses a larger group of desired characteristics or

behaviors, which can be quantified and assessed through existing industrial-

organizational psychology tools. Furthermore, each value is associated with desired

organizational outcomes such as turnover, organizational commitment, performance, trust

in management, citizenship behavior, and contextual performance.

The Army expects a great deal from its leaders. The list of desired characteristics

compiled in chapter 2 included commitment, sustainable effort, disciplined, exhibit pride

in performance, refuse to accept failure, be physically and mentally fit, lethal, survivable,

perform under stress, able to simplify complexities, incorporate the human dimension in

all missions, be service-minded, adaptable, teamwork-oriented, versatile, agile,

responsive, handle ambiguity, do what is right, be confident, decisive, autonomous,

visionary, and innovative. Arguably, this list could include many more attributes. By any

description, finding personnel that embody all or most of these characteristics is a

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challenging task for any organization! Once accessed into the organization, such leaders would become exceptionally valuable human capital for the organization, worthy of focus for retention incentives.

Implications

Complex System of Variables, No Independent Factors

The results of the meta-analysis produced three key implications. The first was found in the interdependence of the factors that influence fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention. The military research studies did not agree on an independent factor that resulted in a direct prediction of turnover intention. A complex system of variables, whose influence changed with age, tenure, and other personal factors highlighted the difficulty in increasing satisfaction and commitment for a half million employees. Patchwork systems of retention program design have been the traditional approach to addressing the varying preferences across the population.

Finding a tool to predict turnover intention during the selection process can improve the retention program design process by eliminating the somewhat random patchwork process, reminiscent of "whack-a-mole". P-O fit can replace or at the very least, augment, the traditional approach by helping the Army obtain an employee force that is more satisfied and committed overall, thus reducing the number of factors leading to dissatisfaction. Additionally, any factors still associated with dissatisfaction may be more consistent across the population, leading to a more focused retention program design and less waste of money, manpower, and time. The findings suggest the Army may want to continue investment in family and community programs, as well as public

affairs and retirement benefits protection, rather than focus on individual rewards or programs, such as retention bonuses or advanced civilian education.

Bringing Order to Chaos

The second key implication stemmed from the first. The complex system of variables, ever changing with age, tenure, and other personal factors, is not an effective framework for dedicating resources to decrease voluntary attrition. Factors are not equal in impact on turnover decisions, nor are they independent or mutually exclusive in their impact on turnover decisions. The factors are interconnected, and patterns of importance emerged in the military research studies. Programs designed and funded to address individual employee satisfaction and commitment variables my have met with success, but it was beyond the scope of this thesis to survey their investment or results. However, a system of selection of officers that may result in a better prediction of satisfaction and commitment would decrease the need to attempt to address the multitude of factors related to commitment. The complex system examined in the meta-analysis seemed chaotic at times and was difficult to categorize, analyze, and present for discussion. A system of P-O fit could bring order to the chaos by aligning the influencing factors, desired characteristics, and desired outcomes with the Army Values. An attempt was made to organize the data in a manner to establish order among the variables and relate them to the Army Values and desired characteristics of the Army leader. Once identified and categorized according to Army values and desired characteristics, each can be incorporated into an OCP for assessing fit.

Factors were categorized as employee-centric or organization-centric. Examples of employee-centric factors were cognitive ability, pay, stature, education, and family

support. Organization-centric factors were sub-categorized as work tasks, organizational culture, organization characteristics, and job involvement. Examples of work tasks included workload, time demands, and task significance. Organizational culture factors included leadership quality, opportunities for an exciting job, and preparation for future responsibility. Examples of organization characteristics were growth (using one's abilities), feedback, tenure, and job security. Job involvement factors most resemble the concept of P-O fit and include job enjoyment, job engagement, job challenge, and autonomy.

The weighted importance of the employee or organization-centric factors provides insight into their importance for current or past members of the military organizations. Within military populations, employee-centric behaviors were less predictive of turnover intention that organization-centric factors, with the possible exception of family support. Within organization-centric factors, job involvement factors consistently emerged as important in forming perceptions related to turnover intention. Job challenge was noted among the factors as one of the most influential on job satisfaction and turnover intention. The organization characteristic of growth, defined as the chance to use one's abilities, and was also noted as highly influential on job satisfaction and turnover intention. As expected, job security was also noted as a strong influencer on organizational commitment and turnover intention. The most influential organizational culture factors were leadership quality, interpersonal relationships, and preparation for future responsibility. All of the work task factors were deemed as significant influencers on turnover intention behavior.

Job involvement factors most closely resembled the description of P-O fit in the military research and the research suggests the weighted importance of these factors elevated them among other organizational factors. This finding implies P-O fit can be the most significant predictor of desired organizational outcomes. The universal impact of work tasks and weighted importance of job involvement factors suggest a talent management system rooted within creation of a challenging, engaging, stable workload, with balanced demands of time against task significance, identity, and predictability may produce a workforce highly satisfied with the Army and highly unlikely to perceive a better situation within the civilian employment sector.

Subjective Assessment

The third key implication gained through the meta-analysis was the interdependence of complex variables couldn't be measured through purely objective metrics. The subjective nature of fit, satisfaction, and commitment formed the foundation for the military employee's rational and careful consideration of turnover intention variables. The subjective nature of fit and satisfaction perception suggests other desirable, but intangible, outcomes may result from high values of fit, satisfaction, and commitment and benefit the organization. Employees willing to "go the extra mile" are one example of an intangible effect of high values of P-O fit. Increased productivity and efficiency are other intangible effects.

Unexpected Findings

One unexpected finding was the lack of standardized or longitudinal research on military populations. The civilian research examined the impact of a standardized set of

factors, but the military research spanned a much larger number of factors and was not standardized across studies. The Army Research Institute and the intermediate level education master's degree programs contributed the most significant studies to the body of research included in the meta-analysis. While the studies seemed to conform to the format and standards for statistical analysis used in civilian research, no standardization of naming conventions or classification of variables seemed to exist. Additionally, there was a surprising lack of longitudinal research on the effects of satisfaction and commitment on turnover intention in military populations.

Another unexpected finding was the lack of correlation between P-O fit and performance. Intuitively, it seems logical to expect an individual that perceived a high level of fit would perform better, but this was not proven in the research examined in this meta-analysis. Therefore, a selection, promotion, and retention system based on performance in college, performance on standardized tests, or job performance may provide an incomplete grasp of the full potential associated with an individual that perceives a high level of fit.

The last unexpected finding was in the lack of correlation between P-O fit and cognitive ability. Cognitive ability was related to performance, which was expected, and therefore makes a reasonable construct for assessing the desirable qualities of the right personnel: cognitive ability and strong performers. Unfortunately, since neither of these were significant predictors of turnover intention, satisfaction, commitment, or fit, they aren't the most reliable screening criterion for retention. The findings on performance and cognitive ability imply the Army could incorporate an assessment of fit at the one, two, and three-year point of an officer's career in conjunction with an annual evaluation

report. The assessment would provide a stronger indicator for turnover intent and a measure of the effect of socialization on an officer's turnover intention. Such a measure may have saved the Army a great deal of money when providing retention bonuses to captains. Many of those that accepted the money intended to remain on active duty without a bonus. A measure of fit could assist in determining the actual target population if retention incentives are needed in the future, and lead to a more efficient use of taxpayer dollars and Army resources.

Recommendations

Further Study

Demographic factors not closely examined in this study were the effect of gender or race on perceptions of fit, satisfaction, commitment, and turnover intention. Assessing the impact of gender on organizational outcomes and influencing factors will be relevant to maintaining desired levels of diversity. A system that is standardized on a limited set of demographic variables may produce skewed results and result in the groupthink and homogeneity that discourages creativity, autonomy, innovation, agility, and other desired characteristics associated with differing perspectives and problem-solving strategies. Additional research on the effects of demographics on fit, satisfaction, commitment, and retention is recommended.

Although influencing factors on turnover intention remain stable over time, the most recent direct data on military populations used in the meta-analysis was from a survey administered in 1999. Further study is recommended to determine changes that may have resulted from the intervening years of deployment and implementation of Army programs focused on retention, pay, and other benefits. Additionally, the

organizational profile and prospective employee populations have aged sixteen years since the last survey. Additional research into the variables and factors that affect retention decisions on the service members of the current generation and the veterans of two wars over the last fifteen years is needed to validate the organizational values and employee expectations and desires related to fit, satisfaction, commitment, and retention.

<u>A Different Approach</u>

Complete sets of current data on voluntary retention were unavailable within the time constraints of this study. Key data was sought, but not obtained for use in this study. Data on the branch preferences by initially accessed officers was unavailable. Additionally, data on the personnel that depart the Army each year was also unavailable. The study initially sought to obtain an estimated value of fit perception by comparing the personnel that voluntarily departed the organization to the personnel's initial choice of branch during the selection process. The hypothesis was personnel assigned to one of their top three preferred branches would perceive a higher value of fit and therefore, report lower levels of turnover than those officers not assigned to one of their top three preferred branches. This methodology should be pursued to provide more concrete support or refutation of the findings of this study. Additionally, further analysis of the values involved in voluntary retention analyzed by commissioning source, basic branch, gender, age, race, family status, and branch preference versus assignment of initially accessed officers can further develop the findings of this study.

<center>Action</center>

After careful review of all results, findings, conclusions, and implications of this meta-analysis, one recommendation for action stands out above the rest. The Army expends significant resources on retention programs, researched and implemented after service members have entered the organization and are nearing the end of a mandatory service obligation. As the research shows, this may not be an effective method, since many service members consider options and determine turnover intent well before reaching that point. Some of those resources would be better applied during the selection process to obtain a measure of P-O fit, which would provide a better predictor of turnover intention. The better prediction of fit facilitates development of a focused retention incentive program, targeting the personnel the Army most needs to retain.

<center>Conclusion</center>

The findings of the meta-analysis support the affirmative response to all of the thesis research questions. The concept of P-O fit can be applied to the officer selection process to decrease voluntary attrition, thus retaining the desired personnel for development and use in critical leadership positions. Development of these officers occurs over a period of six to twelve years. Investment in employees that spans over half a decade cannot be replicated or reproduced without financial and intangible costs to the individual and organization.

The Army's retention problem rarely lies in numbers, but more frequently focuses on the quality of the personnel it retains. The capacity of human capital contained in the Army is impressive and worth the investment of available resources and tools to identify the right personnel for accession. The Army invests in programs to improve satisfaction

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and commitment. This study does not recommend the Army cancel or replace those programs, but the findings suggest clearly defining desired characteristics and behavior expectations for assessment during the selection process could result in more efficient investment in the training and development of the right leaders for the future demands of the Army. Including an assessment of the Army Values during the selection process could result in an improved screening tool to assist in numerous human resource decisions, to include hiring and assignment. Incorporating assessments of P-O fit, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment into a talent management system nested within the Army Values and mission command philosophy, may be the missing key to gaining the type of leader capable of personifying the agile and adaptive leader so desperately sought by the Army.

GLOSSARY

Complementary fit. A type of P-O fit where individuals meet a need or fulfills a desired task or role in an organization.

Demand-Abilities fit. A type of P-O fit where an individual's abilities correspond with the needs of the organization.

Firm-specific human capital. Represents an internally developed knowledge, skills, and abilities set that is not easily transferred outside the organization.

General human capital. Represents knowledge, skills, and abilities sets that are broad, generalized, and easily transferred between organizations.

Knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Talents, expertise, and related experiences required for success in a job or organization.

Needs-Supplied fit. A type of P-O fit where employee needs are met by the organization.

Organizational citizenship behaviors. Qualities or behaviors desired by an organization within its employees or members, such as mutual trust, reciprocity, loyalty, and commitment.

Organizational culture. System of values, actions, and principles that exists within an organization and influences the behaviors of its members.

Organizational Relationships. Employer-employee patterns of interaction, transaction, and exchange. Also described as contracts.

Organizational socialization. A process where employees become familiar with the unique demands and culture of the organization. The employee acquires knowledge on the values of the organization, expected behaviors, and their role within the organization.

Person-Organization Fit (P-O fit). Compatibility between people and organizations. Achieved when the people and organizations meet the needs or values of the other, share similar fundamental characteristics or values, and perceive a high level of congruence between the characteristics and values.

Relational psychological contract. An organizational relationship grounded in trust, long-term relatiosnhips, ambiguity in details of job requirements and expectations, complexity in mutual demands, reciprocity and commitment.

Social Information Processing Theory. Postulates the opinion of others can influence an individual's opinion and attitudes.

Supplementary fit. A type of P-O fit where individuals and organizations possess similar characteristics.

Transactional psychological contract. An organizational relationship grounded in specific requirements and rewards; KSAs are clearly specified and transition easily between organizations.

Turnover intention. Most accurate predictctor of actual turnover behavior, measured by asking direct questions about the individual's willingness to voluntarily remain or withdraw from an organization.

Values. A stable set of characteristics used to guide decision-making. Values in P-O fit are defined as the employer-employee relationship dimensions. They can vary in importance as the environment changes.

Value congruence. Often seen as interchangeable with P-O fit, the degree to which an individual's and organization's values overlap.

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